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MEN OF CAPITAL.

BY

MRS. GORE,

AUTHORESS OF

"THE BANKER'S WIFE," "PEERS AND PARVENUS," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

Few will deny that the age we live in is the age of Money-worship; or that, foremost among the votaries of Mammon, are our own country-people. In Great Britain, however vehement the disputes between High Church and Low, the Molten Calf remains the predominant idol.

That this passion for gold constitutes a fertile source of national greatness, is equally indisputable. But for our appetite for enrichment, our colonies had never been founded, our foreign enterprises never attempted. Mephitic climates had not been braved or perilous seas navigated, in order to extract from

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turn. Their days are devoted to a campaign for the recovery of their birthright. Interested marriages, shabby bargains, and political jobbery, may often be traced to the vile system of things which converts the elder son into a Dives, and makes a Lazarus of his brother.

The first of the two following stories is related nearly in the terms in which it was told me by one of the actors in a drama sadly illustrative of the evil influence of mercenary motives. But, lest the title should appear to elevate a mere narrative of facts into the exemplification of an exclusive principle, a second tale is subjoined, exhibiting the Man of Capital in his nobler phases, as well as the difficulties arrayed against his progress in his seemingly velvet career.—

The inhabitants of a metropolis like London, where speculators occasionally ascend by

a single stride from the counter to the gorgeous palace of Aladdin, may deny the truth of the picture. But more than one country neighbourhood will have to confess that little exaggeration has been used in delineating the opposition of its ancient county families to the intrusion and wholesome innovations of a MAN OF CAPITAL.

THE

MAN OF CAPITAL;

OR,

INTEREST AND PRINCIPLE.

CHAPTER I.

L'amitié vient sans qu'on y songe. Elle se forme insensiblement, et s'affirme avec les années: et les vrais amis le sont longtemps, avant de s'aviser d'en prendre le nom.

ROUSSEAU.

If it were solely of my own adventures I had to tell, not even the flattering proposition I have received would induce me to throw myself personally on the compassion of the reader. But the history of another is closely interwoven with my own—the history of one whom, at various epochs of his life, the world has been pleased to love and honour; —first, as a capital fellow, and lastly, as a man of capital.

It was at Eton I first became acquainted with Barty Brookes.

"My name is Bartholomew," said he; in answer to an inquiry which I addressed to him on the subject. "But it puts people in mind of Smithfield, a fair, and an hospital; while 'Barty' sounds so like 'Bertie,' that I pass for a relation of Lord Abingdon's, and come off all the better with the Dons."

By this, it will be seen that Barty had already an eye to his interests. He was, in fact, compelled to have a care of them; for who else cared a straw about the matter?—Barty was, like myself, a younger brother; and, like myself, an orphan.

He had become one, indeed, so shortly after his birth, that his notions of family affection were as imaginative as those of an Andover-Union pauper of a sirloin of beef. During his preparatory school-days, he had indulged in a vague notion that some boys were born of parents, and some of guardians—

like the Hindoo castes, emitted by the head or feet of Bramah; or, rather, that guardian was the name expressive in the English language of a bad father, as the French word *marâtre* of a savage stepmother. Instead of describing *his* by the touching phrase in which the painter Raphael used to address his guardian, "*Carissimo quanto padre*," he was never known to call him otherwise than "the old hunks."

By degrees, he learned to modify the appellation; for he saw that, in the case of his elder brother, Sir Robert Brookes, only a year older than himself and subjected to the same guardianship, there was reason to invest the office with all the tenderness of paternity. Any one might see that Sir Robert succeeded to an entailed estate of five thousand per annum, and Barty to exactly the amount of his yearly income.

There were three children of them. They had a sister, who, being brought up in

Suffolk by a maiden aunt, remained an invisible girl to her brothers. But as little Harriet's portion was no larger than Barty's, she probably shared his opinion, that Justinian Broadham, Esq., M.P., of Lombard Street and East Wandsworth, belonged to the *rugosus* or *spinosissimus* species of the genus Guardian.

The parents of these children had died before the elder of the three was four years old, within a few months of each other; some said, of a pulmonary complaint,—others, of the overjoy of succeeding to the fine property of Wrenhurst Park, by the sudden death of a bachelor uncle, in the prime of life and matrimonial intentions.

But the untimely death of Barty's father soon after his accession of fortune, had rendered it impossible to increase the portions of his younger children, consisting of five thousand pounds apiece—the third of the splendid fortune on which a young man pos-

sessed of ten, and a girl possessed of five, had been rash enough to marry, and become founders of a family.

The grandfather of my friend Barty, an opulent Yorkshire grazier, had worked his way upwards in the world, and converted his hundreds into hundreds of thousands, and his paddocks into a park; while his uncle, the second of the dynasty, had converted certain of his thousands into a baronetcy, at that epoch of the reign of George III., when half the worthies of the parish of Marylebone used to go to bed John Thompson, and rise Sir John. The little Sir Robert Brookes, of Wrenhurst Park, who was conveyed to Eton in the handsome post-chariot of his guardian, was consequently entitled to the utmost protection of Dr. Keate, as a Bart. of three descents, in the enjoyment of a fine landed property; and people were as little likely to trouble themselves about his origin, as to inquire whether he had a younger brother.

A year afterwards, Barty himself was forwarded, by the Clewer coach, to the same destination. Had any human being besides his old nurse felt interested in his destinies, the proposition would probably have been mooted, whether the school that was good for a lad with five thousand per annum, was not *too* good for a lad with scarcely the half of five hundred. But no questions were asked. Old Broadham satisfied his conscience with muttering something about "the advantages of connection to a youth who has his way to push in the world;" a specious interpretation of the fact that it was less trouble to have the boys at the same school; and that the same "fetching for the holidays" served for both.

He had never exactly understood why his friendship with Sir Robert the first, whose Yorkshire connection was the means of establishing his constituency in Lombard Street, should have put it into the head of Barty's

father to burden him with the guardianship of his young family; for though in ancient Rome the birth of three children intitled a man, by virtue of the *jus trium liberorum*, to certain enfranchisements, the banker did not see why, in modern Wandsworth, the privilege was to be renewed. And if he accepted a trust, of which every possible cost was to be defrayed out of the estate, it was chiefly lest the large Yorkshire and Lincolnshire constituency, for which he was indebted to the Brookeses, should take his refusal amiss.

Both were good-looking lads. But Barty, who had roughed his way through the hard fare and hard work of a Yorkshire school, while Sir Robert was kept in silken leading-strings at an Academy near town, had already learned that a man must square his elbows who has to push his way through the crowd; while his elder understood the wisdom of standing still, that his way might be pushed

for him. With his schoolfellows, the active brother was of course the more popular. But Sir Robert had still the best of it at Wandsworth.

Among the many arguments by which old Broadham justified to himself the education he was giving to a lad so slenderly provided for as Barty, was that Sir Robert, on attaining his majority, would doubtless execute for his younger brother the vague duty of rich relationship—"doing something." The young Baronet, on succeeding to an unencumbered estate, enriched by the savings of his minority, must "do something" for Barty. Even to himself, the banker did not particularize what the "something" was to be: whether another five thousand tacked to his patrimony,—or the purchase-money of a living, or commission. But, among three children so unequally portioned, the elder has to play the part of a father towards the other two.

Old Broadham probably conceived that

Barty himself entertained similar expectations;—so contented or rather so joyous was the temper with which he confronted the troubles of life.—Barty Brookes was imperturbable,—Barty Brookes was insubmergeable.—He had not been six months at Eton, before he was one of the most popular fellows in the school.

Like other younger sons who have only their skins to be careful of, *his* was risked without a thought. Were I to recount the personal feats of my friend Barty, the credulous age we live in, which swallows the wildfire anecdotes of an American newspaper, would laugh me to scorn. The staid banker, into whose ears stories of his reckless bravery were poured in all directions, began to shake his head, and doubt whether any good would come of his ward. Even his chums admitted him to be a perfect dare-devil. "The thing is," said Barty, when challenged concerning his exploits, "I'm obliged to break bounds,

ride, shoot, climb, swim and row, for *two!*— Bob is such a deuce of a spoony and takes such confounded care of himself, that, for the honour of the family, I am forced to run constant risk of expulsion."

No one but his brother ever dreamed of abbreviating Sir Robert into "Bob." His toes were as square as if he had been born as well as bred in Lombard Street.— He was an exemplary young gentleman, — the pride of Keate, and idol of his dame; who took back to Wandsworth, at the close of his half, two thirds of the pocket-money he had brought with him to Eton.

The translation of the proprietor of Wrenhurst from Eton to Oxford, was the moment that brought the relative position of the two boys to a crisis. Old Broadham, judging that, at sixteen and seventeen, they were old enough to listen to his first speech from the throne, apprized them that their roads must henceforward lie apart; since "Bar-

tholomew,"—(*he* did not abate a single syllable of the four,)—was not sufficiently well off to enjoy the advantages of a university education.

But, if he had calculated on the probability that the "something" to be done by the young baronet would now demonstrate itself in the shape of a request that Barty might accompany him to Christ church *quand même*, and at his cost,—he was thoroughly mistaken. —Sir Robert was delighted to get rid of the only one of his young companions who took the liberty of calling him Bob; and as to Barty, after throwing up his hat for joy at the notion of his education being over three years before that of his brother, and listening with an air of wonder to the old banker's impudent promise to exert his interest to obtain him a clerkship in some substantial house of business, he announced his intention of entering the Guards.

"The *Guards?*—the Guards, with an in-

come of two hundred and ten pounds a year? Where would the money come from, for the purchase of his commission?—and to what did the imprudent young man expect to work his way?"—

"Let the future take care of itself!"—cried the foolish boy in reply.—"As to the commission, my godfather, Sir Willoughby Marsden, has already obtained the promise of one from the Horse Guards."

This intimation of a secret understanding and correspondence between Barty and his godfather,—(an old general officer high in favour with the royal family and high in fashion at the Cocoa Tree,) completed the antipathy of the city man towards his thoughtless ward. Hitherto, he had despised him as a wretched younger son. He now began to abhor him as a wretched younger son who had found friends. Even Sir Robert, on discovering that Barty had a protector, regarded him as less his brother.

"The time will come, young gentleman," said the banker, "when you will understand the advantage it would have been to you to enter life as the protégé of a man of capital rather than of a man of fashion. In the city, *my* recommendation would have gone for something. But, since you prefer tinsel to gold, so be it. A red coat has its charm, I presume, even though likely to be threadbare. But one thing, Mr. Brookes, I beg you to understand; that, incur what debts or difficulties you may, not a shilling beyond the two hundred and ten pounds thirteen shillings and eightpence per annum to which you are legitimately intitled will you receive at my hands, till the attainment of your majority. Your brother may hereafter do something for you, if he thinks proper. But, till he is of age, his allowance of six hundred per annum—"

He paused—having suddenly discovered that Sir Robert was his only auditor! At

the height of his discourse, Barty had profited by the open window near which he was standing, to drop down upon the velvet lawn of old Broadham's villa; and leave the lecture for the enjoyment of the elder brother, who monopolized so many of the good things of the family.

CHAPTER II.

Every guise of fortune
Is smoothed by that below. The learned pate
Ducks to the golden fool. All is oblique.
There's nothing level in our cursed natures
But direct villany.

SHAKSPEARE.

It was not alone to get rid of his prosy guardian, that Barty had bolted. He had caught sight at the extremity of the shrubbery of Emmy's white gown,—or rather white frock, for she was little more than a child.

Child as she was, however, Emmy was the only thing that made the Broadhams' formal establishment supportable to Barty; the old banker being as stiff as the clay of Wrenhurst, or, as a German court. His grandfather was a quaker, his father a wet quaker; and though

Justinian had taken refuge in the bosom of the Mother Church, it was only that she might roll him on castors into parliament. To his constituents, Broadham was a high churchman. He was still a quaker at heart.

In his Wandsworth home, all was tame, cold, and colourless—the clockwork routine of a life without passions or predilections. A hearty laugh had never been heard in the house. A great joy was it to Barty when he could get a rise out of his guardian by a crash of china or furniture, or an inbreak into the patent steam grapery he loved.

"Think how obliged the old soul ought to be to me," said he, in describing the extreme measures to which he was obliged to have recourse, "for quickening the circulation of his blood!"

But from the moment Emmy made her appearance in the house, Barty had mercy on the arm-chairs and dessert plates. One day, in a sudden fit of enthusiasm or qualm of

conscience, Mrs. Broadham was pleased to adopt one of the twelve fatherless children of a poor relation. But though her only son was married and settled, no sooner had poor Emmy become her inmate, than she repented her false start of generosity; and, but that she contrived to make the girl useful in winding worsted, writing notes, and supporting the ill-humours of a rainy day, would perhaps have found some pretext for wrangling out of her bargain.

For the present, however, Emmy retained possession of her unenviable post, and Barty's last two holidays from Eton were cheered by the companionship of a fellow-sufferer under Broadham persecution. Together, they were talked at, together threatened by the old folks. Denied the society of his sister, Barty rejoiced at having found a friend; and the first flood of tears ever seen to proceed from the blue eyes of Emmy was on learning that her playmate was about to enter the army.

"You will never set foot in this dreary house again, when once you are in the Guards," said she. "Who *would*, that could help it!—I shall have no one now to keep me company but your brother; and I would as soon walk in the shrubberies with Mr. Broadham himself, as Sir Robert!"

"Don't be afraid, darling Emmy!" cried her young Romeo. "So long as you remain with the Broadhams, I will never desert the house. Much as I detest it and all its ways, I shall often ride down to Wandsworth, to see what you are about."

But Emmy's tears flowed only more freely at the thoughts that he who was to ride down, must also ride back again, and leave her more cheerless than before! For nearly a day after Barty took his last leave of his guardian's establishment, to join the battalion of Guards into which he had been gazetted some weeks before, the poor girl was inconsolable. While the crabbed banker and his cold moiety

drew a deep breath of relief, at having got rid of him, the sighs of the poor relation were as warm as the patent steam grapehouse of old Broadham.

On joining his regiment, meanwhile, Barty was not long in discovering that the patronage of his red-nosed old godfather was to be limited to the commission he had obtained for him. But Sir Willoughby, who was a thorough man of the world, if he gave him nothing else, was no niggard of his advice.

"You have got into the Guards in haste, Mr. Brookes," said he, "and will mayhap repent at leisure. Better have stuck to the city. Better have stuck to the banking connection in which you have been brought up. Nothing to be done in the army, as times go! No getting on without interest—no getting on without money; and you have neither one nor t'other! Even those who are backed, like myself, by family influence, find them-

selves laid on the shelf at last, with a pension incomparably less than the wages of a French cook. If I had life to begin again, I would almost as soon be a scavenger as a soldier! The army is the only profession that precludes all hope of the acquirement of a fortune such as intitles a man to look his fellow-creatures in the face."

And though Barty laughed in his sleeve at this pithy oration, the facts of the case forced themselves on his recognition much sooner than he could have desired. Sir Willoughby was right. He was *not* rich enough for the Guards. He saw his brother officers in the enjoyment of a thousand pleasures which to *him* were forbidden fruit. Where was the use of London, if all its enjoyments were out of reach?

It was perhaps the habit of revolving this wisdom in his mind, that left him no leisure for the accomplishment of his promises to his old playmate. Had Wandsworth been in

Yorkshire, he could hardly have found it more difficult to reach. Or was it that the preaching of Sir Willoughby had enlightened his mind to the danger of so intimate a friendship with one still more penniless than himself?—

One dreary Sunday evening, however, towards the end of August, when the better half of his brother-officers were off to the moors, the opera being closed, and the very sun like an old plated candlestick beginning to show copper in place of its customary brightness, the parched dreariness of the empty park recalled to mind the grassy freshness of old Broadham's velvet lawn — that fine soft turf produced by a century of mowing; and lo! his desponding mood gave way in a moment at the thought of Wandsworth and its Hamadryad — that darling Emmy, with whom he had so often traversed that short green herbage — race-running in the early spring,—or in the dusk of a summer's

evening,—their arms interlaced,—their hearts nearly as closely entwined.

His heart was full, when he thought of all this;—all the fuller, perhaps, because his pockets were empty;—a combination singularly favourable to the development of pathetic sentiment.

"I will ride down to Wandsworth, damme if I don't!" murmured he, at the close of his reverie; adding, in a lower voice, as if in palliation of his rashness, "for there is not a soul left in town, and I may as well keep up my connection with the Broadhams."

As he approached the villa, Barty prepared his courage for reproaches. The old people were probably indignant at his neglect. The young one—alas! what could he possibly say in excuse for himself to Emmy!

No occasion for a single word! — Mrs. Broadham received him with her usual placid indifference, — apparently unconscious that more than a day had elapsed since they

parted; and as to Emmy, she was grown nearly as frigid and reserved as the rest of the family. The romping girl was already transmuted into a grave young woman. While surveying her inexpressive face and perpendicular person, Barty could scarcely bring himself to believe that, but a few weeks before, they had run races together in the twilight.

So far from grieving after his absence, she evidently regretted that he had not continued to stay away; and no sooner had the indignant Barty made the discovery, than he hastened to accept the invitation of the Broadhams to dine, and ride back to town in the cool of the evening. Since she wanted him gone, he would remain.

It was the custom of the enfranchised man of business to devote his sabbath leisure to carnal pleasures. As sure as Sunday came, half the Stock Exchange was seated round his dinner-table: — city chums, pious worshippers like himself of the molten calf, and, like

himself, as expert as Birch or Grove in deciding on the richness of the turbot, or ripeness of the haunch.

Well did Barty remember how he used to watch with loathing the greedy tremulousness of lip with which these sensualists gloated over their repast! But he now noted it with fifty-fold greater abhorrence. Not alone, because, in the interim, he had sat at good men's feasts, and perceived how much the intellectual predominated over the physical, in the pleasant chat and sparkling wit of the best dinner tables of London; but because convinced that, among those ponderous mortals whose capacities were absorbed in the pursuit of gain, lay the charm which had operated so strange a revolution in the nature of Emmy.

They were chiefly single men. For it is only bachelor guests who are at the disposal of Sunday dinners; and, disgusting as he had found aforetime the obesity of the prize-ox

Russia merchant from Great St. Helen's—the squinting stockbroker from Birchin Lane, attired in the resplendent fashions of Moses and Co.—and the spare banker from the Poultry, whose face was puckered into the thousand wrinkles of a collapsed India-rubber ball, (each of whom, like the prudent Mr. Thomas Inkle, would have sold his Yarico into slavery,) never had he found them, severally and collectively, so repellent as with the conviction that the Broadhams had influenced their poor dependant to select among these men of millions a home more permanent than she derived from their grudging benevolence. The same philosophy expounded to himself by Sir Willoughby Marsden had probably made a convert of Emmy.

His approval or disapproval was a matter of complete indifference to the whole party. In their opinion, antipathies or predilections were luxuries as much beyond the reach of so small a capitalist, as turtle and venison; and,

like them, only to be enjoyed at the cost of other people.

When, therefore, the young guardsman endeavoured to speak daggers to the cits by a pungent allusion to the money-changers in the Temple, they treated his impertinence with the disregard they would have shown to the buzzing of a gnat; and pursued among themselves the discussion of their bargains of the preceding week.

Justinian Broadham was their main link with the legislature of the country; and, as it happened that the Sunday in question was the one immediately following the prorogation of parliament, a variety of explanations and projects were discussed between them, of such vital importance to the interests of national commerce, that even the self-complacent Barty was forced to feel that an ensign of his majesty's foot-guards is but a Lilliputian fraction of the empire of Great Britain.

The sense of his insignificance did not, however, put him in better conceit with these tame elephants—these moneyed men—most of them as yellow as if the gold they loved were flowing molten in their veins. But he ceased to wonder that contact with such a weight of metal had deadened the spirits of his pretty little Emmy. A few more such Sundays, and he should himself be qualified to represent a metropolitan district.

The prospect, perhaps, was not displeasing, —or curiosity had the best of it—or his heart still remained full, and his pockets empty; for he found nothing better to do than return Sunday after Sunday, to the villa. Amazing the quantity of venison and turtle, bulls and bears, scrip and omnium, which he contrived to swallow. And still, without attaining a surmise *which* of the eight or ten humpish, hazy old fellows who constituted the Broadham coterie, had proved the means of con-

verting the wilful, wayward Emmy into a Mrs. Margery Meanwell!

He dwelt indeed so curiously upon the question, that he was as near as possible striking the balance between a pair of arch blue eyes and his future prospects in life. But, luckily for my friend Barty, just as he was on the point of renouncing the charms of pounds, shillings, and pence for himself and his heirs for ever, London began to fill again. —The theatres opened—the gas-lights blazed —the clubs became slightly sprinkled—and, after the first Thames flood, the Wandsworth Road was again voted impassable. A flirtation is a pleasant thing, but not when it leads a man into a quagmire; and, as old Broadham, like Childe Waters in the ballad,

> Was never so courteous a knight
> As to say, my Barty, will you ride?—

he remained high and dry in St. James's, leaving the miry ways of Wandsworth,

and unaccountable ways of Emmy, to take care of themselves.

Once lost sight of, and by degrees dismissed from his thoughts, he was all the happier. It was about that time, commenced my intimacy with Barty. We were in the same regiment. I was just then making a two years' income of my patrimony, for the creation of a momentary flash of fashion; and of those by whose applause and example I was stimulated, Barty Brookes was by far the most attractive.

By example, I do not mean as regards prodigality; for he was not yet of age, and was much too well acquainted with the obstinacy of the ex-Quaker (which Broadham called steadiness to his word,) to hazard the annoyances certain to arise from exceeding his income. The stiff old general, Sir Willoughby, moreover, in presenting him with his commission, had insisted too strongly on the ungentlemanliness of incurring liabilities beyond

his means, that after the first six months he managed his small income with the financial wisdom of a Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Still, as the son and brother of a wealthy baronet, he passed for a young man of good fortune and good prospects. No one but myself in the regiment was aware of the real state of the case; and. as every body is ready to give to those who want nothing, Barty, being so capital a horseman that every one was glad to mount him, became the crack rider with the buckhounds, and, by winning several steeple-chases, had more than once doubled the value of a horse; while, during the summer months, his high courage and nautical skill and, above all, his companionableness and good humour insured him six times as much yachting as was compatible with his regimental duties.

Scarcely a fellow in his battalion who had shooting at his disposal, but shared it with Barty; and, on occasions of Richmond and

Greenwich parties, the best place on the best drag was sure to be reserved for him. His jokes were successful,—his songs encored. Never was there so capital a fellow as Barty Brookes!

From eighteen to twenty, what can a man want more than such a life? From eighteen to twenty, what man, leading such a life, is likely to look forward? Providence for the future, under such circumstances, would be like tucking an umbrella under one's arm, for a walk in the dog days.

Even when the time approached for the attainment of his brother's majority, (the term previous to which Sir Robert was to quit Oxford after taking his degree,) Barty troubled himself no further concerning the critical moment which was to enable his brother to "do" the "something" so often and so vaguely alluded to, than by congratulating himself that the lease for which the Wrenhurst property had been let, would then

expire; and that, for the future, he should have excellent shooting of his own, (was not his brother's his own?) to offer to his friends, in return for all he had been enjoying. Sir Robert was a grave, silent young man, a bit of a prig, and a bit of a spoony, who would leave all that sort of thing in his hands.

Already, by anticipation, he felt how pleasant it would be to have a country house to which he could take down a friend, for a few days' sport; and I was probably not the only fellow of his set to whom he had already tendered the hospitalities of the house of his fathers. I hope I was the only one rash enough to provide himself in consequence with leather gaiters and a shooting-jacket!

One day—a hot summer's day it was,—one of those stirring London-season days, when the necessity of keeping open one's windows exposes one, in addition to the thunder of the carriages, to ear-piercing cries of "fresh-gathered strawberries" and "green hastings,"

I was lying extended on the brown Holland sofa of my lodgings, vainly attempting to doze over the novel of O'Donnell, then in the first brilliancy of its favour, when, lo! in burst Barty, begging me to take his guard for him on the following day.

It was not weather to be obliging, and I was brute enough to stand out.

"I wouldn't ask you again *so soon*, my dear fellow," cried he,—(and let the word explain how often my good will towards him was imposed upon,)—"but I *must* have to-morrow to myself!"

"And so must I," was my languid answer, —"for I shall be up till morning at the Argyle Rooms."

"Just for this once!—I will take two for you in return!"

"Some coaching expedition to the Black Dog!"

"In that case, you would be of the party!"

"A Greenwich dinner then, with Chéri! Considering how the last ended, depend upon it I will not aid and abet you in such another scrape."

"You are quite out, my dear fellow!" persisted Barty.—"This is another affair. —I have got a formal invitation for dinner to-morrow at my guardian's; and as my brother is to be in town to-night, I conclude it is for a sort of family meeting; for it is more than a twelvemonth since old Broadham condescended to ask me into his house."

"Why could you not tell me all this at first?" said I,—exchanging my horizontal for the perpendicular, and entering more eagerly into his prospects than could have been expected in such weather, from even the best of friends. "Business before pleasure!—Of course I will take your guard."

Before I was relieved from it, I had a visit from Barty in person, on his way home from Wandsworth to his lodgings.

When he first entered the room, where both the atmosphere and my sight were somewhat troubled by the meerschaum I had been smoking, I fancied for a single second that old Broadham's Port, Madeira, and lime-punch, had been too much for brains accustomed to claret and champagne. A singular look about the eyes seemed to announce that Barty was *cut*.

And so he was,—to the soul!—He was literally reeling under the shock he had received.

The family-meeting had been called preparatory to Sir Robert's attainment of years of discretion, to announce to Barty not what he intended to "do for him,"—but what he was going to do for himself. His wedding day was to follow that of his coming of age!

"Going to be married?" cried I, who, in common with the rest of Barty's friends, had indulged in absurd dreams of his future in-

heritance of Wrenhurst.—"Too young by half,—too young—too young!"

"Too old by half, for such a piece of tom-foolery as he is about to be guilty of!" rejoined my friend.

Apprehending by the exasperation of his manner that Sir Robert had been deluded into one of those wretched connections sometimes provoked at Oxford by the rawness of an undergraduate, I had not courage to question him further.

"When I arrived to-day at Hypocrisy Hall," said he—(it was thus he always designated his guardian's villa)—"I was convinced from the horribly demure faces of the whole party, that some monstrous treachery was brewing. I vow to Heaven, my dear Percy, that a nabaub arriving by the last India fleet on the look-out for investments for his money, could not have been more warmly welcomed. Old Lombard-Street in-

quired twice before we sat down to dinner whether I minded a draught; and helped me to an Alderman's share of the fin of the turbot and fat of the haunch!—The Judas!"

And poor Barty was literally forced to pause and wipe away the moisture of agitation from his forehead.

"After dinner," continued he, with a gasp, —"the moment his Simon-Pure-looking butler had quitted the room, the old sinner, looking round the table with a smirk of complacency I shall never forget, proposed a toast—the health of Sir Robert and Lady Brookes!"—

"Married already?"—

"You look almost as much amazed as I did!—No!—It was merely a delicate pleasantry of the kind that prevails at Wandsworth. But the future bride and bridegroom looked quite as overwhelmed as though the funeral service had already been read over them, and the drop fallen!"

"The bride?—you did not tell me the bride had been asked to meet you.—And who then, after all, is to be the future Lady Bountiful of Wrenhurst Park?"

"*Who?*—Cannot you guess, my dear fellow,—cannot you guess?—That confounded little jilt—Emmy!"—

CHAPTER III.

Art sick?—art sad?—art angry with the world?—
Do all friends fail thee?—Why, then give thyself
Unto the forests and ambrosial fields:
Commerce with them and with the eternal sky.
Never despair!

PROCTOR.

It needed no great stress of argument on my part to convince poor Barty, that if he betrayed to the wedding-party the following day only half the emotion he was now exhibiting, his depression would be attributed to the most degrading motives. His brother knew nothing, and his guardian pretended to know nothing, of any previous rompings between him and the bride. The match had been long arranged. Mrs. Broadham's prudent suggestions to her dependent kinswoman touching her future establishment were fur-

ther sighted than Barty had at first supposed; and, at the very time my friend was so jealous of the fat Russian merchant and lean stock-broker, Emmy was his affianced sister-in-law.

It could scarcely be otherwise. The young Baronet's vacations were spent under his guardian's roof; nor had he ever opened his lips to any other young lady than the blue-eyed and slender-waisted but exceedingly demure damsel, whose price, he was assured, was beyond rubies.

However enraged, therefore, at finding himself thus cleverly jockeyed, Barty retained sufficient self-command to go through the part of bridesman with grace and spirit; and, as his young sister and her maiden aunt had been invited out of Suffolk to be present at the ceremony, he experienced some compensation in his introduction to Harriet, whom he saw almost for the first time, for the annoyances arising from the match.

I must say a word or two of Harriet, though

I trust the attention of the reader is absorbed now by the vexations of Barty; for Miss Brookes was a girl of so gentle and retiring a nature, that none but her intimates were qualified to speak of her as she deserved. Though but a year younger than Barty, (and myself) compared with us, she was a child. Her existence had been of so secluded a nature, that she had scarcely voice to answer the commonest question, and trembled when looked at. A hard fate! for those who caught a single glimpse of her sweet face found it a difficult matter to look at anything else.

Barty was enchanted with her. Judging of his family by his reserved brother, it had never occurred to him that a sister could be anything so delightful. And though by the marriage of that day he lost his chance of the baronetcy and five thousand a year, he rose next morning feeling himself richer than he had ever felt in his life. It is true that I, who had been invited to the wedding-

breakfast to keep him in countenance, had never ceased congratulating him since the event, not upon having such a sister-in-law, but such a sister.

"And did old Broadham say nothing to you, in the course of the day," I inquired,—(having noticed sundry whisperings pass between the wily guardian and his ward) "concerning what Sir Robert is to do for you?"

"Not a syllable."

"The announcement is probably deferred, then, till you come of age next year? Your brother, doubtless, means to provide for you —the estate being entailed—out of his savings!"

"Hardly," replied Barty, with a scornful smile. "For the private conversation you noticed between me and the old gentleman purported to intimate that, in order not to encumber with a dower the landed property of his ward, the accumu-

lations of the minority were settled on Lady Brookes and her children."

"And you did not break out, even *then*?"

"To what purpose? The deed of settlement was signed, sealed, and delivered before I even heard of the match! And a pretty match old Lombard-Street has proved for me. Hang him!—In these days, it is so seldom that a squaretoes like that obtains the advantage over one of *us*!"

"After all his unmeaning protestations, then, you conceive that Sir Robert has put it out of his power to make any addition to yours and Miss Brookes's fortunes?"

"Harriet wants nothing of him. A pretty girl marries as easily with five thousand pounds, as ten. But I *do* mean that every guinea of his money is disposed of. Henceforward, I know what I have got to trust to,—and little enough it is."

From that day, Barty, who had bee hitherto so thoughtless of fortune and care-

less of his future prospects, became suddenly inoculated with interestedness. He began to value money as a man who, in a trance, hears the nails knocking into his coffin, may be supposed to value life. Contented as he had always been, now that his destinies were immutable, he found them insufficient for his happiness. The fortune to achieve which had sufficed to deteriorate the character of the candid Emmy, deteriorated also by its loss the character of poor Barty.

As to Sir Robert's "doing something" for him, when he came of age, he now knew better than to expect it. And experience confirmed his wisdom. The brothers never met, but the proprietor of Wrenhurst took occasion to bewail his poverty.

"It was such a trying thing—such a *very* trying thing,—to live in a neighbourhood inhabited by families of thrice your income. Their neighbours at Wrenhurst were the Duke of Allonby, who was spending sixty

thousand per annum; Lord Spalding, with five-and-thirty; and Sir Archibald Honer and Sir Thomas Walmisley, twenty thousand a year apiece!—To live amongst such men on terms of gentlemanly equality, was a difficult matter for a man with a miserable five! He did not know how he should get on. It would be a hard matter to make both ends meet. Though Emmy's experience in so prudent a household as that of the Broadhams had naturally made her an excellent manager, he greatly feared that by the end of the year they should find Wrenhurst too great a pull upon their income."

Poor Barty began almost to doubt whether it was not rather his duty to assign one of his two hundreds a year to his brother, towards keeping up the family place, rather than claim anything at his hands; nor would he have accepted succour of the overtasked baronet, even had it been offered.

The worst of it was that Barty's sudden

perception, not only of the value of money but of his own straitened prospects, began to operate on his temper, and render him a less agreeable companion. By the time a little heir was born to Wrenhurst, so thoroughly had his fine flow of spirits run dry, that people grew less fond of having him at their dinners in London, and Christmas parties in the country. His face had lost its cherubic proportions, and become as long as a visitation sermon. His joyous voice was acquiring a peevish inflexion. The tenor of his days had ceased to be *couleur de rose*. The inward canker of money-love was beginning its ravages!—

Though he had never experienced the smallest temptation to run in debt, now that his credit was reduced to such diminutive proportions, he made it a grievance that, had he wished it ever so much, he could not have commanded the loan of a thousand pounds.

This fractiousness was the more unlucky

because, no sooner is it discovered in a regiment that a man possesses a *raw*, than it is played upon without mercy. His brother officers had no patience with Barty,—their own generous, rough-and-ready Barty,—for looking with such envious eyes on the happiness and good fortune of his brother.

There was a Lord James (no matter what) in our company—not a bad fellow in essentials—but so overflowing with spirits, from an accumulation of the prosperities of existence, that his liveliness was sometimes scarcely to be borne by fellows smarting under the rubs of life. With good health, good looks, good fortune, and good blood to create sunshine around him, he was a bad companion for a rainy day; for, so far from seeking to communicate his contentedness to others, his happy fortunes surrounded him with a mephitic atmosphere of egotism, like the malaria engendered by a luxuriant jungle.

"I shall come and ask you for a day's

sport at Wrenhurst, on my way back from the Moors, Barty, my boy," said he, a month or two after the wedding; "I suppose you spend the shooting season in the North?"

"Most likely in town," was the morose reply.

"In town?—Stuff and nonsense!—September and October in the Tower, counting the sparrows perched on the weathercocks, when you have the best pheasant-shooting in England at your command."

"At my *brother's* command."

"What is *his* is yours—except his wife. By Jove, if *my* Cain were to make any demur about giving me shooting, for myself and friends, I should make no scruple about winging him!"—

"The Duke of Gateshead and your lordship live on other terms than I and my brother," said Barty, stiffly. "You have something to give in return."

"And so have *you*, if you'd the spirit to

give it!—a good lesson—*à deux sous le cachet.* Only write Sir Robert word that, since he does not choose to allow you a fair share of the family preserves..."

"Who said he did not *choose?*"—interrupted Barty, peevishly. "Wait till I complain, before you redress my injuries. It does not follow that, because I am unable to offer pheasant shooting to the brother of a duke who has manors in every county in England, I am on bad terms with Sir Robert Brookes!"—

"Still, a brother whose minority must have been heaping up stacks of gold, might surely contrive to..."

"When I want advice about my family affairs, my dear Lord James, I go to my family lawyer!"—was the bitter retort of Barty, who hated to have his private history dragged out for the amusement of the mess. "When I consult you, I give you leave to favour me with your counsels."

It was only to *me* he spoke more freely. *I* was not so enscaled within the golden armour of prosperity, as to render me insensible to the troubles of my friends. *I* could sympathize in his disappointments!

It was not, however, about money that he complained. The "something" of which he felt himself robbed, was not the other half of his fortune.

"It *is* hard," said he, "that a man like Robert," (he had ceased to call him Bob) "possessed of all the endowments of this life, could not leave so small a thing to his poor wretch of a younger brother, as his guardian's poor relation!—He was welcome to all the rest. He had no business to meddle with Emmy!"

All the love which united the two brothers in their nursing pinafore and nankin frocks—all the sympathy that made them sit hand-in-hand during the pantomime in the Christmas holidays, that they might support each other's

courage at the explosion of the squibs, had already subsided into mere acquaintanceship, demonstrated on Sir Robert's part by an annual letter, to announce the sprouting of an olive branch;—on that of Barty, by nothing.—He did not wait till offence was given him. He chose to *take* it!—

As I said before, I alone was in his confidence. But besides what he chose to confide, the chafings of his spirit showed themselves in a thousand nameless trifles.

One Christmas, a couple of years after the marriage, I happened to be going down to stay with Lord and Lady Mandevale, who had made a party for the Bury ball (one of the best provincial meetings in England); and on the eve of my departure, knowing that his maiden aunt resided in the neighbourhood, I asked Barty for a letter of introduction.

I know not whether his mind misgave him that I had canvassed for the invitation that was carrying me into Suffolk, expressly in

the hope of renewing my acquaintance with Harriet, but he refused my request point blank. Had I been as apt as himself to take offence, there would have been an end of all friendship between us.

"Not the least chance of your meeting with my good aunt at the Bury ball!" said he, perceiving that his ungraciousness had offended me. "The worthy woman is too grave for such scenes—and too poor!"

"But I may, perhaps, meet Miss Brookes under the chaperonage of some other person?"

"In that case, the acquaintance you made with her at Hypocrisy Hall forestals the necessity for an introduction."

"I could almost fancy, Barty," said I, pettishly, "that you disapproved my acquaintance with your family!"

"And so I do!" was his gruff but honest answer. "Half the miseries in this world arise from acquaintanceships, rashly made, and entailing fatal results."

"And you fancy that a visit from *me* might entail fatal results on Oak Hill?" said I, with a forced smile.

"How came you to know the name of their residence?" interrupted he, with an air of growing suspicion.

"Considering the number of times I have seen letters addressed thither in your handwriting..."

"I have not written to either my aunt or sister these twelve months."

"Do not quarrel with me, because my memory is better than your own," cried I. "Surely there is no crime in feeling an interest in the sister of my friend?"

"No crime, but prodigious folly!" retorted he. "I tell you, again, my dear Percy, my sister is *poor*—as poor as *I* am—miserably poor!"—

"The greater the equality between us!" was my rash rejoinder.

"Curse the equality! Harriet must marry

a rich man. Together, you would be wretched! —together, you would be contemptible!"

"I only ask an introduction to a partner at a ball—not to a partner for life."

"Ball-partnerships are the foundation of a thousand miserable matches."

"In one word, my dear Barty, you are awfully afraid of having me for a brother-in-law."

"Thanks to my having Sir Robert Brookes for a brother,—thanks to the cursed influence of Hypocrisy Hall!—I have learned, to my cost, the misery of poverty. I know what it is, now, to be stinted at every turn, and ashamed to look one's valet in the face, because he is better dressed than oneself. Were I master of Wrenhurst, indeed, I would say make yourself acceptable to Harriet, if you *can*; and, if secure of her affections, nothing shall be wanting that brotherly regard can afford you. But I can do nothing. I am myself little better than a pauper. I must

go struggling and striving on, to the end of my days; never drawing a free breath like a gentleman, or able to afford the comforts of life."

"Your brother cannot but advance the means of pushing you in your profession," I suggested, foreseeing one of his moods of crabbed despondency.

"My profession, my profession!"—was his peevish rejoinder. "These are not times when the army can be called a profession. A poor captain in the Guards is as wretched a thing as a poor anything else. No, my dear Percy! mouth as we may about disinterestedness, and greatness of soul, and all that sort of rubbish, depend upon it money is the only thing that renders life palatable. A man of capital is the only man who is his own master, and the master of other people."

"I fear you are right!" said I, with a heavy sigh; "and, alas! the sore disease called poverty is hereditary in *my* family, as in some others the gout."

"Take my advice, therefore, my dear fellow!" cried he. "Go and dance at the Bury ball, without troubling your head about my sister. You will find plenty of charming partners besides Miss Brookes."

I took his advice, already aware that in ball-rooms neither Harriet nor her aunt were likely to be found. But the way in which he chose to prejudge the affair rendered it impossible for me to confide to him a fact, of which he remained in ignorance, almost unbrotherly; *i. e.* that Oak Hill was situated on the borders of Lord Mandevale's park, and that I was about to spend the Christmas holidays within a bow-shot of the garden of Eden.

If I did not inform him of this previous to my departure, I was not likely to be more candid on my return; for it might have put an end to all friendship and good-will between us, to know that, without fear of his displeasure before my eyes, I had passed

more than half the time of my absence in company with that dear Harriet to whom he seemed bent on keeping me a stranger!

Mandevale Park seemed perfectly aware that one of its highest titles to consideration arose from its contiguity to the humble little domain of Oak Hill. Not alone were Mrs. Brookes and her niece included in all its *fêtes*, but the Mandevales appeared to think it the most natural thing in the world that, every morning after breakfast, instead of joining the shooting party or repairing to the billiard-room with the rest of the young men, I should be seen scudding along the park,—under an umbrella too, for the weather was most unpropitious,—in the direction of the old house, said to be the original residence of the Mandevale family, before a rich marriage enabled them to erect their present handsome mansion.

In calling the weather unpropitious, however, I talk like a fool; for it was perfection

for a wooer. Thanks to Macintosh and Caoutchouc, a man may present himself, in the worst of weather, as dry as a bag of Carolina rice, in defiance of rain, hail, or sleet. Whereas by concealing his clogs and umbrella in a dark corner of the hall, he is intitled to look out despondingly at the clouds, at what ought to be the close of his visit; so that not even the most hard-hearted of parents or guardians but must insist on his remaining "till it clears up."

It scarcely "cleared up" during the ten days of my visit to the Mandevales! I conclude so, at least, for I scarcely ever left Oak Hill. Every evening, the aunt and niece joined our sociable party at the Hall; and the consequence was, that, just as Barty had predicted, the night of the Bury ball was the only one we did not spend together.

Mrs. Brookes's decided objection to large assemblies was not to be shaken by the entreaties of the Mandevale party, that her

amiable charge might, for once in her life, enjoy the pleasures of a ball-room. For, alas! it was by enjoying them "once in *her* life," that her own days had been embittered. That little, frail, delicate-looking maiden aunt, whose complexion resembled one of Benvenuto Cellini's carvings in ivory, while the short hair, parted over her smooth forehead, was white as silver, had fallen into premature decrepitude, thanks to a single flirtation at a county ball.

The attachment!—of which it laid the foundation—had never known a day of sunshine. The Brookes family had been *created* by the system of sacrificing the younger children to the aggrandizement of the elder son. For a time, indeed, the young couple had looked forward for the means of settling, to the bounties of the bachelor brother from whom Barty's father inherited his fortune; and when his sudden death was followed by the untimely decease of his successor, and a long

minority, all hope of an addition to their scanty fortunes vanished; whereupon the poor soldier went with his regiment—a condemned regiment—to die in the West Indies; bequeathing on his death-bed to his plighted love the small patrimony they had trusted to enjoy together.

It was this provision, small as it was, that enabled her to afford a home to her brother's orphan. But the domestic calamity in which it had its rise inspired her with an insurmountable abhorrence of public entertainments.

But they were the only things in the world she hated! — Impossible to see a gentler, milder, more feminine creature, than the woman under whose wing Harriet had acquired such heavenly serenity of nature. It was a strange proof of the force of prejudice, that she did not foresee the same dangers for her niece from mingling in the fashionable circle at Mandevale, as in a promiscuous ball-room. But her mind was

swayed by a single fixed idea. In Mrs. Brookes's opinion, love was, of necessity, born amid the clang of an orchestra, and the flaring of chandeliers!—Whereas the Hall was a safe place. Lord Mandevale was her landlord, Lady Mandevale her friend; and the guests collected round them were persons belonging to those higher classes of society, which have little in common with a condemned regiment. For to the simple apprehension of one whose days had been divided between two country villages—the one where she saw the light, and the one where (as the birthplace of her lost love, and burial-place of his family) she hoped to resign it—rank and fortune were inseparable.

I was wrong, perhaps, not to set her right on this point early in our acquaintance. But I had never suffered Harriet to remain in error; and it was her fault—if she could have a fault—that Mrs. Brookes was not duly apprized of my being nearly as bad a

match as the poor fellow who had gone to die at Barbadoes. For, though the little mild old lady liked me all the better for my red coat (as she would have done her nephew Barty, but for his contemptuous neglect), I doubt whether her predilection would have been increased by learning in how many respects the resemblance held good.—God knows I would have laid down *my* life for Harriet!

I told her so—I am afraid I told her so! —After the warning I had received from Barty, and the misery I knew to have been occasioned in the family by indiscreet attachments, I *ought*, perhaps, to have kept a sterner guard over my feelings. But I ask you, in all candour, dear readers,—such of you, at least, as are made of penetrable stuff,—whether it was possible for a young fellow of three and twenty, desperately in love, to sit morning after morning beside the piano of a girl who sang old ballads and Handel's songs

to him, as long as he chose to ask for them, in tones that wrung tears out of his heart; or between the two work-tables established on either side the fireplace of that neat, snug little drawing-room, so simply yet so tastefully furnished, where every thing was so completely in its place, that, after spending a certain number of hours there, I fancied even *I* must have a right to be there,—I only ask you, I say, whether it was possible to preserve one's frigid reason in the midst of such intoxicating enjoyments?—

As the sister of my friend, as the chosen of my heart, she seemed so much my own, that, for the life and soul of me, I could not forbear imploring her sympathy in that miserable want of fortune, which precluded me from entreating her permission to demand her hand!

CHAPTER IV.

In wooing her, I found her of more value
Than stamps in gold or sums in sealed bags.
SHAKSPEARE.

You perhaps imagine, gentle reader, that on my return to London, my friendship with Barty became cemented into still warmer intimacy by my passion for his sister?—

On the contrary, a wall of ice seemed to have arisen between us! In his company, I felt guilty and ashamed. After replying frankly to the inquiry which accompanied his first shake-hands, of "whether I had seen the old lady and Harriet," that both were well, and much mortified by his systematic silence, I satisfied my conscience by apprising him

that his predictions had come to pass—that neither argument nor persuasion had induced Mrs. Brookes to sanction the appearance of her niece at the Bury ball.

"Right—quite right!" cried he. "Why inspire poor Harriet with a taste for pleasures which her fortune will never enable her to enjoy?"—

"People take their daughters to such places," said I, endeavouring to smile, "expressly that they may accomplish the fortunes enabling them to enjoy them."

"Husband-hunting, eh?—For that, Heaven be thanked, my old maid of an aunt is too highminded!"—

"Still," pleaded I, "if, in a ball-room, people's means and appliances were scrupulously examined, surely few would show a better title to be there, than Miss Brookes?"

"As the old lady is luckily of the same way of thinking as myself, we will not dispute the matter!" said he. "Enough that a

ball room marred the happiness for life of *one* of the family !—But for my aunt's imprudent attachment, she might have made more than one good match, and secured happiness for herself and a thousand advantages for us all."

By all this, I saw that the moment was not propitious for confiding to him all that Harriet had determined to renounce for my sake ; or assuring him that *my* future happiness was comprehended in the little drawing-room at Oak Hill. And, by a natural consequence, concealment begat coldness. I began to see less of him ;—partly, because I felt like a liar and hypocrite in his company ;—partly, because the discontents engendered by his bootless aspirations after riches rendered it insupportable. A third son having been born at Wrenhurst, there was no longer the smallest chance of assistance in that quarter. Sir Robert expressed himself somewhat peevishly, indeed, in announcing this

rapid increase of his olive branches; though he was careful to add that never was man blessed with so thrifty and frugal a wife. But, according to his account, poor Emmy was beginning to deny herself the necessaries of life, in order that the junior branches might be properly provided for.

Much to the advantage of my purse and my constancy, our battalion was just then quartered at Windsor. We led a quiet life of it. At that time, there was no railway to whisk one from Slough to London and back, "ere one could say, it lightens;" and our fellows were consequently forced to content themselves with glimpses of their London loves, on such rare occasions as Ascot Races, Eton Montem, or the Rowing Match.

By way of cloak to the consciousness of having his heart full and his pockets empty, Barty, under these circumstances, affected the country gentleman; a character which his skill in athletic exercises enabled him to sup-

port with more credit than most of his brother officers. As the best bat at Lord's, he carried the day in whatever cricket-match he chose to engage; and in our rowing-matches to Maidenhead Bridge, no one ventured to bet against the boat among whose crew was Barty Brookes.

From a natural preference of my barrack-room, with its sketch-books and music-books, to pastimes that took one out under a broiling sun in the dog-days, I was voted a spoony. But I was not the less interested in the manly triumphs of my friend.

Still, this discrepancy of habits served to widen the distance between us. As a sportsman, Barty was led to form a hundred new connections of whom I knew nothing. Invitations poured in upon him;—and whenever at mess I inquired "what had become of Brookes," I was sure to be answered that he was dining at Maidenhead, or Bracknell, or Englefield Green. He was becoming as po-

pular in the country as ever he had been about town.

Too much occupied with the lights and shadows of my own heart to take heed whether these absences of Barty were attributed oftenest to Bracknell, Maidenhead, or Englefield Green, I had some difficulty in making out the meaning of certain significant smiles which, towards the end of summer, began to curl the lips of my brother officers whenever I inquired where Barty was dining. Even when they answered me in so many words, "at Datchet!" — even when Lord James threw himself back in his chair and crowed like chanticleer at my simplicity,—I was not much the wiser.

"You are really *impayable*, my dear Percy!" cried he. "Where do you put your eyes, ears, and understanding, not to know that Barty dines to-day where he dined yesterday, and will dine to-morrow, if he can

persuade you to be such an ass as take his guard for him—at Datchet!"—

"But there is no *inn* at Datchet?"—said I, as if fancying a Botham's the only dining-place for young guardsmen;—"and who on earth can he possibly know there?"

"Better ask him, to-night, when he comes home!—Perhaps he may take the question better from *you* than he has from *us!*"—

I did ask him on the morrow; and his answer, so far from being pettish, as Lord James's hints had prepared me to expect, was more gracious than anything I had extracted from him since my visit to Suffolk. My suspicions were almost excited by his unusual amenity. His softened manner argued of the man in love.

"I dined at Datchet Mead," said he, in answer to my inquiry. "I dined at the Stanleys'."

"The Stanleys?—Anything to Lord Derby?"—

"Not that I am aware of—kind, hospitable people—but not what men like Lord James understand by people of the world."

"And young?"—

"The portion of the family in whom youth is a merit, cannot be called old," replied Barty, without resenting my inquisitiveness. "*Mrs.* Stanley is not above five-and-twenty, and as pretty as five-and-twenty ought to be. —Stanley is past fifty."

I could now understand why so many mouths were screwed up at mess, whenever I inquired "what Barty could possibly be doing at Datchet?" and determined to inquire further on the subject, though not of *him!* I was afraid my dear Harriet's brother might be in danger!

"Burn his fingers?— Yes, I should think he *would* burn his fingers!"—was Lord James's ready reply to my cross-questioning.— "Stanley is anything but a man to be trifled with. Stanley is surly and burly as an ogre."

"And his lady as pretty as Barty represents her?"

"At all events, pretty enough to pass for an angel, in country quarters! Their place, too, is a pleasant, cool, quaint, green kind of place. Lisbon House, they call it,—because built and inhabited in Charles the Second's time by some Portuguese ambassador.—The curious evergreens with which the gardens are darkened, are said to have been planted in his time."

"I don't care about the evergreens,—I want to know about Mrs. Stanley.—Is she dangerous? Is she clever as well as pretty?"

"The most dangerous women I recognize, my dear fellow, are pretty fools!"—retorted Lord James. "A blue beauty, like the rattlesnake, carries her own antidote. But Mrs. Stanley is, I fancy, neither a genius nor a natural. The sort of person one finds it convenient to dine with twice a week—that is, after recommend-

ing her husband a new wine merchant, and establishing oneself on the footing of sending one's clothes to the house to dress."

"And is it on *this* system Barty Brookes is living with the Stanleys?"—

"He is a greater fool than I take him for if he accept them on any other! Stanley is a regular snob—a reading man—the sort of fellow only seen at the Alfred, or Thorpe's book sales. But as he is wise enough to perceive that Barty's assiduities relieve him from the *peine forte et dure* of entertaining his foolish wife, and are far less exceptionable than if she had taken up with some Ensign Smith, or the curate of the parish, our friend is allowed to make *la pluie et le beau temps* in the house."

A sad account this; for, glibly as such things are talked of in their opening chapter, there comes a time when smooth becomes rough, and the friends who have jested so pleasantly and barefacedly on the *liaison*

resent being subpœnaed to give evidence in a witness-box. But Barty and I were sufficiently friends for me to say to him, in an off-hand manner,—"Take care you do not get into a scrape! With a couple so ill matched in respect to age as the Stanleys, it is always ten to one that the husband wants to get rid of his wife."

"And the wife of her husband! But, trust me, I am not the cat's-paw for such a purpose. I have too much respect for the holy institution of matrimony, not to be carefully on my guard."

I was too much absorbed, just then, by my own feelings, to interest myself in the affairs of strangers. Mr. Stanley was to *me* only a name. I had not so much as seen him; and, as he was decidedly of an age to take care both of himself and his wife, I left him to his fate.

At the period in question, the private drives in Windsor Park and Forest were even more

strictly reserved than now. A few families of consideration in the neighbourhood, however, were favoured with keys; and during the absence of the royal family from the Castle a key of office belonging to a person high in the household was at the disposal of Brookes, myself, and one or two other of my brother officers.

I was pretty nearly the only one of them who ever profited by the privilege. A man in love delights in the loneliest of haunts; and there was something soothing in the noble sweep of evergreens adjoining the Virginia water,—the long, long shrubbery, with its short herbage, seldom travelled by a heavier footfall than the scudding rabbits abounding on the spot, or any other living thing but the wood pigeons, whose shadows flitted across the turf, as they winged their way high over head, in the sunshine.

Of late, however, I had been several times disappointed in my application for the key.

"Captain Brookes" (all young officers are captains to a footman,) had been beforehand with me.

I was a little surprised: for Barty was a man to prefer the Long Walk, or the London road, or any other of the king's highways, to rural privacy. I had never expected to find my solitary haunts invaded by Barty!—

As it was impossible for both the kings of Brentford to reign at once on the spot, I had no means of verifying whether he appropriated the key to his own use, or that of some friend. He seldom dined at mess; and, when we met on duty, there were other matters to be discussed.

One sultry summer day, however, when the heat of the weather suggested to the utmost the charm of the gloomy pine walk, with its resinous shade, and the glassy surface of the Virginia water glittering at intervals between, to suggest sensations of freshness and coolness, I was so fortunate as

to monopolize the key. By an early application, I forestalled my brother officers; and was off, with a biscuit and a volume of Wordsworth in my pocket, before the eyes of fashionable young gentlemen, like Barty Brookes and Lord James, were half unclosed! I intended to muse away the day, till dinner-time, in the neighbourhood of the Belvedere.

I was monarch of all I surveyed. The Court was away. Not a human being was stirring, except at intervals a park-keeper, with his dog-whip under his arm, and a pointer puppy at his heels.

It struck me that to one of these worthies I must be an object of suspicion; for I plainly saw him watching me from a distance; and, when I moved from the position I had taken up, he appeared to be cautiously dogging me.

I had half a mind to go boldly up to the fellow, and satisfy any misgivings he might entertain about my right to be there, by exhi-

biting my official key. But the moment I started to fulfil my purpose, he was off with hastier strides than my own.

Shortly afterwards, having reached one of the heights commanding a view of the farm, as I stood looking down upon a field of buck-wheat in full bloom that promised well for the royal pheasants, I discovered the same keeper, accompanied by a second, hurrying back towards the walk, as if desirous to have a witness of my presence.

At that moment, however, I was too much struck by the lowering aspect of the weather, to take further heed of his movements. A storm was coming on; and my only object was to hurry on towards the nearest gate, from which I was nearly a mile distant, that I might make my way into Black Ness road, for the chance of some passing vehicle to expedite my passage across the park.

Just as I reached within a hundred yards of the gate, it was impetuously opened from

without; and in came the person I had noticed at a distance as accompanying the keeper, who, instead of a comrade, proved to be a middle-aged gentleman. For some unexplained reason, however, they certainly *had* been walking together, as companions. For, the moment the gate which formed a portion of the high palings was flung open, I saw him skulk off. But the glitter of the gold lace on his collar was perceptible, even at a distance, against the dark masses of the Portugal laurels.

At any other moment, my curiosity would have been excited by this strange intrusion. But the rain was, by this time, falling so heavily that, unprovided with an umbrella, all my care was to get under shelter, till the heavy thunder-shower was past. Already several sharp flashes had vivified the now gloomy expanse of the Virginia water; and the thunder was booming with considerable grandeur among the surrounding hills.

I found leisure to appreciate its grandeur, by stationing myself to the windward of the lofty palings, so as to defy the pelting rain: and decided, on seeing the stranger establish himself in the same position, that the impetuous movements which had so surprised me originated in his anxiety to reach its shelter before the commencement of the storm.

"What mysteries," thought I, "one is sometimes tempted to create out of the most trivial occurrences!—At a distance, I was half inclined to convert this gentlemanly old man into a constable!"—

Strange to tell, as the storm darkened, his countenance grew more cheerful. Cowering as we were side by side against the palings, that secured us from the driving rain, it was impossible to retain the reserve of strangeness; and, after mutually congratulating each other on not being exposed to such a downpour in the midst of the clayey

plain, we soon made acquaintance. I thought it odd, however, that when I deplored the disappointment of my day in the woods, *he* should hail the change of weather as if a blessing. He seemed in the highest spirits.—He was probably a farmer.—Perhaps the country wanted rain.

By degrees, as the patter upon the leaves of the evergreens grew less unremitting, our intimacy ripened. The kind-hearted old gentleman informed me that his carriage was waiting for him at Black Ness Gate, scarcely half a mile distant, and that, after leaving him at his house, it might convey me to the barracks. My buttons proved me to belong to the battalion of guards quartered at Windsor. But it was only after I had accepted his offer, and we were actually in the chariot together on the high road, that he announced *his* name to be —Stanley!—

By the time we approached the old

crumbling brick-wall of Lisbon House, with its projecting summer-house at each angle of the garden, and a profusion of white and red snapdragon starting from every crevice, we had so warmed into friendship, that he insisted upon my accompanying him home to dinner.

"As the friend of his young friend Mr. Brookes, he knew me perfectly by name and reputation. He could not think of allowing me to take an hour's drive in my wet clothes. He would send off a groom to Windsor for my servant. I should have Mr. Brookes's room."

I must tell you that this spontaneous glow of old Stanley in my favour appeared to arise from my answer to his interrogation as to whether I was in the habit of frequenting the walk where our encounter took place.

"Almost daily!"—was my frank reply. And there was something so fervent in the murmur

of "Thank God!" that escaped his lips, as to place me instantly on my guard.

I now saw clearly that I *had* been watched: but watched only because mistaken for another.

When, therefore, my kind host proceeded to inquire whether my friend Mr. Brookes had not *also* a key of the private drives, or access to such a key, I replied evasively, that "if he had, I should think him the last man in the regiment likely to take advantage of it. Brookes was always boating or cricketing.—Brookes was too fond of noise and society, to find pleasure in such haunts."

"I thought so—I said so—I was sure it would turn out to be a mistake!"—exclaimed the delighted old man. "Idle people are so fond of making mischief!"—

And it was not for me to acquaint him how completely he was betraying his feelings.

"How should the keepers know one officer from another!"—added he, as if talking to himself. "They are nearly of a height.—I knew it would turn out a mistake!"

CHAPTER V.

They say the devil snake did tempt the woman.
But, ha! ha! ha! *who* tempted *him* to tempt?
Give me good answer there?—Why, '*twas* the woman.
The fiend found somewhat which did stir his blood
(If blood he had,)—some sting—some appetite.
The love of evil?—Well, what caused the love?
What was't that first begot the insane touch
Which crept amidst his bright and rancorous scales?
What sight—or sound—or dream?—'Twas she! the WOMAN!

BARRY CORNWALL.

A flower-garden is always doubly delicious after a thunder-shower. But I do not remember to have been ever more struck by the fragrance and freshness of a spot, no, not even of Oak Hill, than by the quaint old garden at Lisbon House.

I hate a modern villa. There is an ostenta-

tion of pert insignificance about the architectural attempts of such places, with their ridiculous serpentine walks, fanciful grass-plots, and shrubberies like an embroidered cambric handkerchief too transparent for use, which strikes me as ludicrous and offensive.

But I love the honest brick-built wayside country house, within gates; its half-a-dozen acres, surrounded by a high wall; its green lawn as square as a sheet of paper; its undevious paths rectangular as New Harmony; its fine old cedar, solitary as its sun-dial. The garden at Lisbon House was full of old-fashioned trees and old-fashioned flowers. It might have sheltered the learned leisure of Sir William Temple. In spite of its Portuguese designation, it was as Dutch as if transplanted from the Hague!—

I can almost fancy myself inhaling at this moment the overgrown masses of honeysuckle, sweetbriar, and jessamine, clinging to the old

walls; and the fraxinella, and dying strawberry leaves, throwing out, as Bacon hath it, "a fine cordial smell."

"Mrs. Stanley will be ready to welcome us. Yes, I am pretty sure Mrs. Stanley must be at home. The storm seems to have fallen as heavy here as at Black Ness, so that perhaps my absence may have made her uneasy," observed my companion, when, the huge iron gates having been thrown open, we rolled round the old-fashioned forecourt, and stopped at a door, the sides of whose lofty granite steps were clothed with greenhouse plants. And already I was beginning to enter so thoroughly into his situation, as to follow the glancing of his eye with the utmost anxiety along the façade of the mansion; hoping, as he did, to detect the gleam of a white dress on the look-out for him, at one of the windows. It would have been a comfort to me to know that the storm *had* rendered Mrs. Stanley anxious.

No vestige of her, however! Only a venerable, gray-headed butler, who met us in the hall, full of interest in his master's wet garments. He seemed indignant when Mr. Stanley, instead of listening to his suggestions of an immediate change, kept inquiring about his lady, and pushing his way across the hall, through an old oak passage with a domed and painted ceiling, towards a certain square cedar parlour, opening to the flower-garden at the rear of the house, which was nearly four feet below its level.

There, indeed, we found the lady of the house; neither anxious nor alarmed, but quietly occupied with her work, as though stitching were the object of her life. As we entered the room, she raised her expressive eyes (which Lord James had amused himself with comparing to sapphires set with diamonds) to her husband's face; and in a moment I was forced to admit, that to lose even so much as *one* of those looks of hers, must

[illegible]

time should be lost in fetching my things, and making me at home, that, before dinner was served, I was half in love with her myself. Before it was *over*, I had sworn a second oath to myself that her happiness should not be sacrificed to the selfish vanity of an idle ensign in country quarters. I found in the Mr. Stanley opprobriated by Lord James as "a regular snob" in manners, one of the most amiable of men, and in mind one of the best informed. Hospitable too, to excess,—almost to a fault;—or, so soon after his cause to regret the introduction of one guardsman into his house, he would scarcely have been so rash as, without cause or necessity, to become the host of another.

But I saw he fancied change of society as indispensable as the air she breathed to the happiness of his young wife; and though it distracted him to watch her in company with her admirers, he had not courage to see her pining with ennui. It was like a

doating parent, unable to withhold pernicious sweetmeats from his child!

Pleasant as was the evening I thus unexpectedly spent in the society of those who had previously so highly raised my curiosity, it was deteriorated by regret at contemplating happiness so nearly perfect as seemed within their reach, in danger of being injured, past redemption, to enliven the idle hours of a purposeless boy. In higher life and gayer scenes, I had witnessed, without much remorse, the domestic peace of more than one noble husband in similar peril. But the unreality and artificiality of *their* lives seemed to guarantee them against any fatal degree of heartbreak on the discovery of their wrongs. As Charles Lamb observes, to palliate our toleration of the immorality of the old comedies, "Nobody cares who is the father of Lord Froth's or Sir Paul Pliant's children."

But it was not so at Lisbon House. *There* was no glitter of fortune.—*There* was no pre-

tension to distinction. Mr. Stanley was descended from a lawyer who had risen to public honours under the patronage of Sir Robert Walpole. The utmost opulence of his successors did not exceed two thousand a year; and he lived in his square old house, as his grandfather had done before him, in comfort, but not luxury. The family pictures on the walls were those of neither baron nor senator; but prim-looking gentlemen in tie-wigs, with prim-looking ladies in gray tabby with white bibs and tuckers; the highly respectable ancestors of a highly respectable race, who still ate and drank out of the old-fashioned plate and Chelsea china they had bequeathed them; and it was Mrs. Stanley's own fault that she did not also parade the same strings of garnets, and ill-set rose diamonds, that figured in the portrait in crayons of Mr. Stanley's grandmother.

The servants in attendance were old family servants; the books on the bookshelves were

old family books. Nothing new or fresh within those walls, but the lovely young woman, who seemed to have crossed its threshold in an evil hour for her own destiny, and that of its inmates.

Whether the mischief perpetrated in that house by my friend Barty were already irreparable, was an enigma which I exercised my utmost power of discernment to unravel. I watched both husband and wife; watched them in the trifles that afford the strongest indications of mutual attachment or mutual aversion; and before the close of the evening, had made up my mind that the gray-haired yet sensitive old man was perplexed by agonizing mistrust of all that was going on under his eyes; while to Mrs. Stanley, the man who had married her chiefly to secure an honourable home to the unprotected and necessitous orphan of a friend, was an object of disgust.—I noticed her, when she thought no one was observing, remove the

cup of tea he had poured out, and prepare another for herself; and, remembering the anecdote of Napoleon touching Sir Hudson Lowe and the coffee-cup, made a shrewd guess at the nature of her feelings.

Impossible to pass over in silence my visit to Lisbon House. I hurried to Barty's barrack-room the following day, expressly to inform him that I had made the acquaintance of his friend, and warn him that Mr. Stanley had taken to morning walks in the shrubberies adjoining the Virginia Water. But to this point of information, the fractious fellow never suffered me to reach.

"What the devil took you to the Stanleys?"—cried he, after the opening phrase of my discourse.—"They are nothing to *you*, nor you to *them!*—You seem to take delight in introducing yourself to all to whom I have private reasons for wishing you to remain a stranger!"

This was ungracious and provoking enough.

But I thought of Harriet, and was resolved not to be affronted.

"Were I to explain to you," said I, "the accident which brought me in contact with the Stanleys, you would perceive that the introduction was as much to *your* advantage as mine."

"As I am neither superannuated nor paralytic, I can assure you that I feel fully competent to the management of my own affairs," was his peevish rejoinder, by which I was sufficiently vexed to determine on leaving him to his ill-humour.

When I came, however, to turn over in my mind all that had fallen from Mr. Stanley, and my conviction that the keepers had been bribed to watch, in consequence of information he had received concerning the morning promenades of Barty and his wife, it went against my conscience not to place the former on his guard.

Conquering my resentment, therefore,

within ten minutes, I returned into the room I had quitted; and, in spite of his surly looks, related to him circumstantially every particular of my interview with Stanley.

At the close of my communication, Barty rose from his seat, and came towards me, extending his hand.

"Thanks!"—said he. "You have done me a great service! Forgive my having been so great a brute just now. But, on such points, most men are captious. I am afraid," added Barty, with one of the open smiles which so well became his handsome face, "that on *most* points I am captious. A disappointed fellow like myself is apt to take the world *en grippe*."

"I was in hopes you did not include me with the rest of the world!"— said I.

"I ought not, for you are a good fellow, and have proved a steady friend!" sighed Barty; and this allusion sealed my lips at once; for I felt certain he alluded to the one

or two emergencies in which my purse had been open to him, rather than to the warm regard which placed my arm and heart at his disposal every day of the year.

"The truth is," continued Barty, as if arguing with himself, "that to a fellow situated as I am, every idle chatterbox presumes to offer advice; — till, hunted into a corner, one turns like a tiger at bay upon friend and foe. That conceited ass, Lord James, is always at me about the Stanleys. What is it to *him*, I should like to know, whether I dine or sleep too often at Lisbon House, or whether my company is as acceptable to the husband as the wife? Except indeed that when we arrived together at Windsor, he endeavoured to obtain the same advantages, and was most egregiously snubbed!"—

"But I, my dear Brookes, never aspired to the same advantages," pleaded I, eager to lead him to the more important part of the

question; "and you may therefore believe in my unprejudiced assurance, that your intimacy in the house is likely to be productive of lasting misery to all parties."

"Like Joseph Surface, in short, you are afraid that I have lately given that worthy man, Sir Peter, much uneasiness," said Barty, bursting into a provoking laugh. "My dear friend, you don't know old Stanley. Old Stanley is a man who had passed through life without a sensation, till he had the supreme luck to make my acquaintance; — a mere bookworm, a fossil specimen, without passions and without joys. Surely he ought to thank rather than reproach me, for giving a fillip to his languid existence."

"Commend me to the gratitude of a person enjoying a state of perfect ease and contentment, to those who have subjected him to pain and torment!"

"In that case," was Barty's careless re-

joinder, "you are still heart-whole; or you would know that

> The sweet perplexities of love,
> Whose agony delights,

are torments ever to be thankful for."

"But Mr. Stanley's perplexities are not exactly those of *love!*" persisted I, trusting to exhaust his vein of levity, and bring him to reason. "And I can assure you, my dear Barty, that there are moments when the expression of his eyes, as they rest upon that beautiful creature—"

"She *is* beautiful — is she not?" — interrupted he, in a scarcely audible voice.

"Denoted feelings which a soul in torment would have shrunk from!" continued I, without administering the flattering unction he demanded. "And you ought seriously to reflect before you endanger Mrs. Stanley's position in society, and still more, her position in the happy home of an indulgent

husband, whether you have so much as food and raiment to offer her, should your conduct cause her to be expulsed from under his roof."

"Ay, there it is—there it is!" cried Barty. "Poverty, always poverty!—always one's miserable, grinding, penniless condition staring one in the face! If I were rich enough to maintain Mrs. Stanley in case of extremity, the deuce a bit would you trouble your head about the immoralities of the affair. These qualms of conscience of yours, my dear Percy, are caused by the chance of our coming upon the parish,—not of our going to the devil."

"I would rather find you safe from both extremes!"—replied I, determined not to be piqued. "But do me the justice to admit that, though I have heard of little else at mess but your flirtation, for the last six weeks, I never annoyed you by the slightest allusion

to it, till my insight into the domestic happiness you were destroying inspired me with the feelings of remorse that *ought* to be your own."

"Domestic happiness!"—reiterated Barty, with a scornful shrug of the shoulders; "what an abuse of terms, or what hypocritical self-deception! *Can* you, in all honesty, apply one of the holiest words in the language to such a connection as that of the Stanleys?"—

"Are they not married then?"—cried I, with the most *naïf* simplicity.

"Married?—to be sure they are,—according to the canons of the Holy Mother Church,—if you call *that* matrimony! But where was the better feeling that should prompt or accompany such a sacrament?—Where was the devoted attachment which is the very soul of marriage?—The match was a mere bargain—as much an affair of money as the purchasing a horse or a register-stove!

Ethel was the orphan daughter of one of Stanley's friends; a public accountant, who, finding himself a defaulter, had not courage to look his disgrace in the face, and blew out his brains. The world considered it an act of wonderful generosity on the part of Stanley, who was a rich old bachelor, that he fitted out the son for India (where he died), and placed the daughter at school, where perhaps she had better have died also.—Cold-blooded rogue!—Aware that he possessed no single quality capable of attaching a woman's heart, he thus bought himself a wife:—bought her by the slow, economical process of yearly instalments. When Ethel grew up, she found herself without a home, and encumbered with a benefactor."

"And *without* a benefactor, what would have become of her?"—interrupted I.

"I suppose it was *that* consideration which determined the poor girl to give him her hand. Their relative position did not admit

of her residing, as an unmarried girl, under his roof; and, rather than remain at the country school which formed her only alternative, she almost proposed to him to make her his wife."

"And you blame him for accepting?"

"Blame him, and execrate him! She was an artless child. He an artful, calculating wretch, who had created the predicament requiring such an extrication. Had Stanley been the high-souled man of honour you endeavour to make him out, he would have said to the poor girl, 'Here is the capital of the income I have hitherto devoted to you. Marry a man of your own age and pursuits.'"

"And where was such a person to be found by a girl immured in a boarding-school? —Absurd!—Mrs. Stanley realized her wish of emancipation, though perhaps at the sacrifice of his own comfort for life."

"A mighty sacrifice, to marry a lovely girl of eighteen!"—

"A girl of eighteen is a thorny rose for the bosom of a man of fifty,—as the sequel has proved!"—

"His meanness has only met with fitting retribution. It is enough, by Heaven, to disgust one with one's species, and make one curse the day one was born, to see the influence exercised by money over all the finer feelings of human nature!—It is not the mortification of wearing a seedy coat, or being splashed by some saucy fool as one tramps in spatterdashes, that renders poverty so galling a grievance. But to find the affections one covets forestalled, like places at a theatre, by the first beast who comes with ready money in his hand!"—

"I will not hear you utter such treason," said I, starting indignantly from my chair; for with Harriet enshrined in my heart, it little became me to listen to blasphemy against the sex.

"Do not deny, unless you can disprove!"

retorted Barty. "Look at me!—Look at my destinies!—When I quitted old Broadham's cursed double-faced penitentiary, that girl who, like all the rest of the world, believed me sure of a gentleman's inheritance, had promised to be mine the moment I was able to claim her hand.—She wore my hair,—she wore the ring that sealed our troth-plight. For some time, we corresponded: and it was only her pretended terror lest our letters should be intercepted and means taken to prevent our further intercourse, that induced me to relinquish the correspondence. Without fear, however. For her last letter to me swore, by all the pretty oaths a woman has at her command, that, if she remained weeks, months, years, without hearing from me, so long as she knew me to be alive, *so* long would she be faithful to her word!—You know the rest.—My brother came and bought me out of her heart!—He was rich, and I was poor. It was enough!—Nay—my very prospects in life,

such as they were, were sacrificed without mercy to repay her treachery by lining her pockets with gold!"

"You had surely little to lament in losing a wife capable of such baseness!" was my sincere rejoinder.

"And now, look at my second dilemma!" cried Barty.—"After the conduct of Emmy, apparently one of the simplest-hearted of God's creatures, I sealed my soul for the remainder of my days; and vowed that nothing should again induce me to put faith in woman. You must have noticed how carefully I abstained from female society. The whole tenor of my life was changed: tennis and billiards, the river or the meadow, sufficed me.—Chance threw me in the way of the Stanleys. At first, it was the quiet gentlemanly old man I sought; who was never weary of taking down the missals and black-letter books from his library for my amusement. I liked his old Madeira, and his old house. I thought so, at

last. But perhaps all the time I deceived myself. Perhaps, from the first, it was his young wife that attached me to Datchet. On the day, however, that I first owned as much to myself, it was simply because I had learned her story,—simply because I knew her to be a victim. — Since that time, I have ceased to ask myself questions on the subject.—I take the day as it comes, with its pains and pleasures, without care for the morrow. And but that you have wrenched all this out of my heart, my dear Percy, by your direct interrogation, should never, even in the secrecy of my chamber, have endeavoured to untwist the entangled skein."

Touched to the quick by this unwonted frankness, earnestly did I adjure him, now that his heart was open, to cleanse it to the utmost of the perilous stuff that threatened danger to so many —. I appealed to his sense of justice, — I appealed to his

[illegible]—to his pride!—But, alas! my friend Barry

[illegible]
Is justly in these men himself—
The last infirmity of evil!

I could only entrust his fate to the care of a Providence, mightier than that of friendship itself!—

CHAPTER VI.

Faith fills the vacant place
Which young affection's absence makes. The man
Who builds the temple of his happiness
On love alone, has but a poor foundation:
But he who roots his hope in virtue's soil
May mock the seasons' change. His home stands firm
A tower of adamant, unmov'd amidst
The storms of fortune.

LORD BEAUMONT.

A few days after this conversation, we were invited to dine together with the Stanleys. I was about to excuse myself, when Barty entreated me so earnestly to accept the invitation, that, fancying he wished to place a restraint on his own conduct by the presence of an interested observer, I complied.

Scarcely was my note gone when, to my infinite mortification he added, "Had you pleaded

an engagement, you see, I should have been forced to decline the use of Stanley's carriage, which he has offered to send for us. I could not have had it out for myself alone."

"And you literally allow him to *send* for you?"—cried I with increasing indignation.

"Why not?—It exercises his horses, which *his* studious habits and Ethel's sedentary ones would otherwise leave to die of fat. By her own will, Mrs. Stanley would never stir further than from the house to the garden, and back again. People affect to pity Turkish and Chinese wives; whereas, half the women in the world, were their instincts consulted, would prefer the same mode of existence."

I saw he was trying to lead me from the question of his unprincipled selfishness;—and, to avoid a quarrel, was forced to submit to be led.

As we were on our way to dine at Lisbon House, Barty took occasion to observe, while reclining in a corner of poor old Stanley's

carriage, that, if I did not object, he would order it early to go home. "He had a letter to write for the morrow's post, which, having a long day's duty before him, he did not care to postpone."

It was so unusual a thing for Barty to talk about letters as a matter of consequence, that I inquired, as he probably intended I should, whether another olive branch was sprouting at Wrenhurst, to require his congratulations; or whether old Broadham kept up a correspondence with him now that their guardianship account was balanced.

"Broadham still acts as my banker," said he.—"In these bad times, a friend in the city is no bad thing, to put one in the way of getting better interest for one's money. The bothering letter I have got to write to-night, however, is to my worthy aunt."

Saying which, he took from his pocket a letter from Mrs. Brookes, both crossed and recrossed; the third page of which contained

a few lines in the well-known handwriting of Harriet !

" Insignificant as I may appear to Sir Robert and the Tartuffes of Hypocrisy House,"—said he, with a scornful smile, " I still remain the oracle of the petticoats of the family. My sister and aunt have prodigious confidence in my opinion. With *them* my yea or nay suffices."

" They appear to have made a somewhat lengthy appeal to your judgment on the present occasion," I rejoined, glancing at the letter, while all the blood in my body seemed tingling in my ears ; so convinced was I that it bore reference to myself.

" Lengthy and unreasonable ! They want me to decide for them whether Harriet is to accept a man I have never seen ; and of whom, previous to this rigmarole letter, I had never heard !—It was therefore necessary to supply me with more facts and features than any thing short of my poor aunt's leisure and

circumstantiality could ever have found means to commit to paper."

I was speechless!—This man, whom I had been provoking, this man whom I had been frustrating in his purposes, held in his hand the fiat of my happiness or misery for life!

"And which way do you intend to turn the scale?" said I, jocosely; flattering myself I had assumed an air of perfect unconcern.—"To wed or not to wed—that is the question."

"I am disposed to say—to wed!" replied Barty, with all the nonchalance I was vainly endeavouring to assume. "Harriet is now nearly of age—nay, by Jove! nearly two and twenty.—Her prospects are far from brilliant. In the event of my aunt's death, she has no one to depend upon but myself; and I need not tell you that I find number one almost more than I am able to take care of. She wants a home, in short; and a home, and a happy and brilliant one, this new Romeo of hers is able to afford her."

Oh! what a heart-sickness came upon me, as I listened! Though the windows of the carriage were all down, I literally gasped for breath.

"You see how right I was," resumed Barty, taking no more heed of my agitation than one does of the gapings of a gold fish in its globe, "in confirming the old lady's objection to public balls. If women would only remain quiet, *partis* are sure to present themselves. Half a dozen London seasons would not have secured a better match for my sister than this Lord Donnington. Donnington has a clear twenty thousand a-year!"

Lucky for me that we were already within sight of the old snapdragoned wall. It was *impossible* to retain much longer my air of equanimity.

"Such a marriage could scarcely fail to please me," added Barty; "as my sister, being thus nobly provided for, I naturally insure the inheritance of the old lady."

"But you do not mean," cried I, hurriedly, just as we reached the iron gates, "that you would sacrifice the happiness of Miss Brookes for the attainment of a few thousand pounds?"—

"Sacrifice her happiness?—Of course not! But when a girl's affections are disengaged (as I know Harriet's to be), I can conceive no possible obstacle to her happiness in such a match as the one that presents itself."

We were already in the hall. We were soon in the oak passage. No possibility of rejoinder, even though my heart was bursting. The announcement of our names compelled me to answer the formal compliments of the Stanleys, and a thousand idle questions from the numerous party assembled. But I spoke like a fool. I could scarcely disentangle my perplexed thoughts. Had Harriet *really* confided to her brother her indifference to me—her readiness to become the wife of another?—Or was all this only the result of

a petty vengeance employed to punish my observations on his intimacy with the Stanleys? Had she commissioned him to apprize me of Lord Donnington's proposal; or was the intimation a volunteer of his own?—

So thoroughly was I beginning to mistrust the man capable of such a game as I saw him playing at Datchet, that I determined to address myself at once to his sister, for a solution of the mystery. The straight road is ever the shortest. Harriet's answer might break my heart; but, at least, it would set my mind at rest.

How unreal appeared everything that was passing around me that day at Lisbon House! I seemed to be moving in a dream. All was mockery—all was bewilderment. To the gravest questions that were addressed to me, I fancy I answered with a hollow laugh; and more than once in the course of the evening the kind-hearted Mr. Stanley inquired whether

I felt ill. Lord James, who was of the party, (which he treated with the cool insolence of dropping in towards the middle of the second course) could scarcely restrain his merriment at the strange blunders of which I was guilty at the whist-table. But even *he* laughed no longer, when he heard me, in a fit of pre-occupation, address our fair hostess by the name of Mrs. Brookes.

I forgave all his impertinence, however, on finding that he had settled to accompany Barty and myself on our return.

"You must book me to-night in your Datchet omnibus, my dear Barty," said he, "for my horse is knocked up." And, in the joy of thus escaping a second *tête-à-tête* with Harriet's brother, I turned a deaf ear to his ungrateful allusions to the man of whose hospitality he was partaking.

But, though firm in my intention of appealing to Miss Brookes for an explanation of her intentions, no sooner did I find myself pen in

hand, with the paper before me, than I became sensible of the trying nature of the task I had undertaken. What was I to say to her? Persuade her to renounce the most brilliant prospects in favour of one who had so little to offer besides his love?—Remind her of promises she seemed disposed to forget, and urge her to throw herself away in defiance of the dictates of her reason — the advice of her family--the remonstrances of her friends?—

Many hours did I consume in writing and re-writing all that was passing in my mind. A grand mistake!—for in matters of feeling, the first letter written is the one to be sent; as surely as in matters of business, it ought to be re-considered. And so, after wasting half the night in copying, and tearing, and amending, the result of all my vacillations was an epistle as hard as if indited by old Broadham, or an Old Bailey counsel! I cannot understand how a fellow, so miserable

as I was at that moment, could have got words together to create such a stern, savage, heartless performance. But having sealed up, as poison to *her*, the well-springs of sensibility overflowing in my heart, there was nothing left for it but to say—"Marry him, if you choose.—Marry him, as most women would in your place. I once thought you different from other women. But no matter!—Marry this lord.—You will perjure yourself.—But again, no matter!—you have my consent,—I fully absolve you!—Marry him."

Four days were to elapse before I could receive the answer; and what days they were!—There was a rowing-match at Maidenhead, in which Barty insisted on engaging me. *He* was in the highest glee. Convinced that his letter to Mrs. Brookes would determine his sister's resolution, and that he was about to acquire a happier home at Donnington Castle than he had lost at Wrenhurst,

he was in towering spirits. We dined at Maidenhead. The losing party gave the dinner, and attempted to drown their chagrin in floods of champagne; and we drove home in two drags, at night, in such a state, that it was a great mercy only one of them was upset, and that nothing but the traces, the carriage, and the collar-bone of a single tender ensign, were broken.

Never shall I forget the remainder of that night! Oppressed as I was with fatigue and headache, I determined to sit up and wait the arrival of the post. I could not sleep till I had received Harriet's letter. But though it was easy to remain watching the gradual enlightening of the heavens—the transition from deep sapphire to greenish gray—dappling into the brighter tints of morn, till the full burst of the glorious effulgence of day—there was pain, amounting to agony, in the feverish sensation produced by excess and anxiety of mind;—the thirst that no

water would slake—the throbbing which no philosophy could tranquillize.

At last I heard the step upon the stairs—the knock at the door! The letter was before me. The letter was in my hands. But they trembled so, that, slight as was the seal, some minutes elapsed before I had strength to tear it open.

And oh! what a heart-breaking letter it was,—heart-breaking from kindness, goodness, gentleness, generosity;—one of those letters that women only can write,—one of those letters that women only can feel,—uncalculating, tender, noble,—flowing from the heart without the smallest interposition of the head.

In the angelic nature of such a woman as Harriet Brookes, let the white wings lie folded, compact, and undreamed of, as they may, the moment occasion requires it, the silver plumes expand, and we know that we

stand in presence of a being of a higher sphere.

My betrothed made no protestations that she had not entertained the intention of accepting Lord Donnington's proposals; but treated such a breach of faith as a thing too impossible to require denial. Of the worldly advantages on which I had insisted so largely and so vulgarly, she said not a syllable. Her only allusion to the consequence of Lord Donnington, was by indirectly making it a pedestal to raise me in my own estimation.

The few lines I had seen in her handwriting addressed to Barty, contained a simple request that he would decline the proposals of Lord D., whom both aunt and niece had referred to *him*, in order to spare themselves a fruitless renewal of importunity; — and I had only the want of generosity of one who, in many things, showed

himself ungenerous, to thank for all the anguish I had been undergoing.

Still, my friend Brookes probably persuaded himself that, in spite of all, the Donnington match would come off at last. His peculiar mode of saying, for weeks afterwards, whenever Suffolk was alluded to — "Were I rich, poor Harriet should follow her own inclinations. Were I in Robert's place, my sister should not be forced to make a *mariage de raison*, in order to secure herself a home—" convinced me that he was satisfied she would end her days at Donnington Castle.

Barty was one of little faith in feminine virtues. I have often observed this failing in men who never knew the happiness of a mother's care; and want of reverence towards the sex is as much a grace the less in a human character, as the want of loyalty in an American's.—The loss of eyesight is, in my opinion, scarcely a greater disfigurement. In spite of Mrs. Stanley's fatal devotion to him,

he persisted in treating her attachment as a feminine caprice; and jealousy of Lord James, who entertained the undisguised project of becoming his rival, was, I verily believe, the only thing that prevented his ingratitude from breaking bounds.

One day, I literally surprised myself, in the act of pleading her cause to him! For, rejoiced as I should have been to know the intimacy at an end, I dreaded the results of such harshness as he was beginning to betray. Harassed by remorse and shrinking from the eye of her husband, I dreaded lest unkindness from *him* should stimulate poor Mrs. Stanley to some *coup de tête*, fatal to the happiness of all parties.

"Brookes is such a thorough dog-in-the manger!" observed Lord James one day, with his usual supercilious impertinence. "He will neither eat his slice of pineapple, nor send it away. After allowing days and days to pass without showing so much as the heel

of his boot at Datchet, he looks Malay kreeses at me on finding me installed in a corner of Mrs. Stanley's sofa; earning her endurance of my company by merely satisfying her that our friend Barty has been on duty, or going where glory waited him, to the Chertsey cricket-match."

"I wish you would contrive to make her careless of his glory, and comings, and goings!" said I, anxiously; "no good can possibly come of their *liaison!*—"

"You think her chance would be mended, then, by attaching herself to *me?*" demanded his lordship, drawing up his shirt collar with a smile, for which, had I been poor Ethel's kinsman, I must have brained him on the spot. "Perhaps you are right! Were the worst to come to the worst, *our* elopement would create little surprise. We are an eloping family. My grandmother, you know, was the divorced Lady Deckenham; and my uncle Arthur carried off the young Marchioness

of Cornwall, the prettiest woman of the regency! People would only shrug their shoulders,—say it was in the blood,—and trust the jury would prove merciful;—whereas such things are less easily forgiven to the younger brother of a country baronet, never heard of half a mile from his lodge gate."

CHAPTER VII.

Woe!—I see the wild wind wreak
Its wrath upon thy gentle bloom;
Winter plough thy rounded cheek,
Cloud and darkness close in gloom,
Blackening over and for ever
Youth's serene and silver river.
Love alike and beauty o'er—
Lonely and belov'd no more.

Sir E. BULWER LYTTON'S
translation from SCHILLER.

I am free to confess that dear Harriet's decided rejection of Lord Donnington added a cubit to my stature!—What I felt on the occasion it would be difficult to describe. It was a *bien être* like that of a person under the influence of opium; an exultation like that of a general who, after labouring under an imputa-

tion of cowardice, unexpectedly wins a battle. I began to amuse myself like the rest of my brother officers. Instead of moping away my days in the Belvedere Shrubbery, I accepted a day's shooting whenever or wherever I could get it; and but that the season was now too far advanced for rowing or cricket, should have belonged to all their matches. Archery, however, was just then the fashion,—a capital thing to bring a country neighbourhood together, and promote the consumption of young ladies, ham, chicken, and champagne.

By entering with apparent gusto into such diversions, I was in hopes of averting the suspicions of Barty. For Harriet had distinctly apprised me that I had nothing but opposition to expect at his hands.

"He would consider it as much an act of friendship towards *you* as of justice towards myself," wrote she, "to put an end to all acquaintance between us."

But, in trying to diminish his suspicions, I

contracted others of my own.—The motive that attracted Barty to Chertsey and other gay haunts of the neighbourhood, was unmistakeable. An heiress, who was pronounced to be *for* an heiress a charming girl, was the presiding divinity of all these parties; from residing with a quizzical uncle and aunt on the borders of Bagshot Heath.

The first thing I saw of these people was their house, and frightful enough it was! White, square, and isolated as a milestone, there was not a tree on the newly-enclosed land surrounding it, higher than the furze which had been pared and burned, to make way for the new plantations. The mansion stared out at you with all its windows, as far as it could see.

"A retired haberdasher, for a thousand!" cried Lord James, when, as we were driving home from Egham races on the top of a drag, we met the immodest stare of Larch Lodge.

But we two were the only men in the regi-

ment who did not know better; and we were readily informed that old Juckeson was a man who had made a prodigious fortune in the Spice Islands; and ambitious, like most low-born men, of creating a family, had expended certain of his hundreds of thousands in the purchase of a wife having an aristocratic name, but neither beauty, merit, nor consequence. But Mrs. Juckeson, though she gave herself prodigious airs, gave none to her husband; and thus disappointed in his hopes, the old gentleman became disgusted with the fine places he had purchased of spendthrift lords in counties, where, having no root in the soil, he found his insignificance vexatiously manifest; and having built a house on ground so new that he was certain of not being twitted with the superior consequence of his predecessors, he adopted a girl whom he called his niece, and who was supposed to he his natural daughter, to inherit the millions produced (like the jolly red nose

in the song) by "nutmegs and ginger, cinnamon and cloves."

Niece, daughter, or ward, Sabina Juckeson was a very striking girl:—millions of degrees inferior in attraction to my gentle Harriet, or even to the soft and sensitive Ethel Stanley, but calculated by her bright complexion and sparkling countenance, her skill as a horsewoman when clearing hedge and ditch with the buck-hounds, and her musical talents, which were of the first order, to turn the heads of every man bearing a commission, whether cavalry or infantry, or arrayed in red coat or blue, from the barracks at Hounslow to those of Clewer!—Aware that the merits of the heiress would extenuate the faults of the woman, the fair Sabina cared little what she said or did, or rather what others thought of her sayings and doings; and because certain of receiving quarter, gave none in return.

The first thing she heard of Barty Brookes,

after our arrival at Windsor, was, that he was devotedly attached to Mrs. Stanley. That he was a pre-engaged man, sufficed to pique her vanity to effect a conquest. An arrant coquette, the heiress of Larch Lodge, possessing no heart of her own, had little faith in the existence of so useless an appendage; fancying that the feelings of others, like her own, were merely assumed for show, like a pair of ear-rings or a breast-pin. All that was spontaneous in her nature was sarcasm. She laughed at everything and everybody. The favourite objects of her pleasantry were her uncle and aunt. But sooner than want a subject for ridicule, I have heard her laugh at her very self.

"Do not flatter yourself," said she to Barty, one day in my presence, soon after I made her acquaintance, as we were all walking together on the terrace at Windsor, while the old gentleman executed in the town some commissions for his wife, "do not flatter

yourself, Mr. Brookes, that you will ever attain the front row, letter A, at Larch Lodge. Our family prepossessions are regulated by the strictest order of precedence. We love Lord James, because he is the son of a duke. We like your friend here (pointing to me), because he is an honourable. As to *you*, sir, who are but the brother of a baronet, and 'last and least in our dear love,' the illustrious house of Juckeson hesitates to open its arms, or wings, to enfold you."

Barty laughed heartily. He knew that Sabina cared as little for the hereditary distinctions in which she was deficient, as I for those which, unsupported by the gifts of fortune, were rather an embarrassment than otherwise.

"But even Lord James's right divine to help the turbot at my aunt's right hand, is nearly at an end," continued the gay Sabina; "for Lord Hedsor, of the Life Guards, has announced his intention of paying us a visit,

and his superior precedence insures superior favour."

"Hedsor is the most unlicked cub in the kingdom!" cried Barty, with an air of disgust. "Are you acquainted with him?"

"With all that the peerage can tell—sufficient for the lord-craving appetites of Larch Lodge!"—

"How passing strange," said I, in pity to Barty's evident irritation, "that Mr. Juckeson, whose life has been spent in the colonies, out of reach of the flourish of courtly trumpets, should lay such enormous stress on mere distinctions of rank!"

"The very reason! My uncle magnifies the consequence of lords, as *I* do that of angels, as the more to be venerated for being invisible. But I do nothing to cure his disorder. Like the pomps and vanities of our ostentatious household, it is the safety-valve that emits a thousand ill-humours. People may laugh at our gilt staircase and

waggon-loads of plate; but think what it would be, were such a love of the gorgeous as my uncle's, thrown into the system! He would become bitter and bilious as a minister out of place; instead of being a good-natured, hospitable old gentleman, throwing his champagne and burgundy at everybody's head."

There was a sprinkling of good sense in Miss Juckeson's impertinence, which, as a stranger, rather amused me. But I foresaw that, with such shrewd perceptions, the suit of an heiress-hunter must fall to the ground.

It was almost a comfort to be able to reply to Mrs. Stanley, when, with quivering lips, and eyes glittering with tears, she inquired concerning the personal charms of the heiress, who appeared to engross the whole attention of Barty—

"A handsome girl, certainly;—but the last in the world to touch the heart of a man of feeling."—

How well I remember the sunny smile with which she requited the intelligence!—Poor soul! *Her* heart was only too deeply touched. —All the commiseration I could spare to any sorrows but my own I was beginning to accord her. Earnestly as I had desired, in the first instance, to moderate her intimacy with Barty, my interposition had come so much too late, that there was as much to deplore in his sudden relinquishment of her society, as in his previous assiduities. The mischief was done—her domestic peace was destroyed.—Happiness had forsaken her roof; and to the small circle in which she lived, all this was so apparent, that there was some pretext for the coldness with which the more rigidly righteous began to hold aloof from Lisbon House.

Nor was the misery of the case confined to poor Mrs. Stanley. Never did I feel more shocked than on noticing, when paying a morning visit at Datchet, towards the beginning

of winter, the change which a few short months had wrought in the place. The cheerfulness produced in even the dullest of country houses by the brightness of summer flowers and verdure perceived through the open doors and windows, is usually replaced by the genial glow of a crackling fire, and the snugness arising from winter furniture and occupations. But under poor Stanley's roof, the clinging fog without, did not strike one as half so chilly and comfortless, as the despondency within. The piano was closed, as though it had been never open. A pile of new books lay uncut on the table. The work-box was shut. The very pillows of the sofa were undisturbed, and the fire burnt lazily in the cedar parlour, into which I was shown, as though it were habitually uninhabited.

While awaiting there the appearance of Mrs. Stanley, the deadness of the atmosphere struck to my heart. The flowerless parterres of the garden, the little fountain, that used

to glisten in the sunshine, now frost-bound and silent, were not more characteristic of the decline of the year, than that disenchanted chamber of the broken spirits of its mistress.

After a delay of ten minutes, down came a sour-looking lady's maid, to say that Mrs. Stanley, who was not very well, "hoped I would excuse her." And on my begging that I might not put her to the slightest inconvenience, and saying I would call some other time, the impertinent smile of the *soubrette* plainly implied that the ailments of her lady were megrims, scarcely worth my sympathy.

As I was crossing the forecourt towards the iron gates, Robson, the gray-headed butler, respectfully recalled me.

"Mr. Stanley was at home. His master would be glad to see me in the library."

Those last few words have always a disagreeable association for my ear; as the

phrase by which, when a boy, I used to be summoned into the presence of a severe grandfather, to be reprimanded for my childish faults. I entered that of Mr. Stanley, accordingly, with something of the sensations of a culprit.

No sooner in the library, than I heartily wished myself out of it. The old gentleman was far more grievously changed than the cedar parlour. His voice had become so feeble, his words so meek, his complexion was so unnaturally wan, and the ears stood out so prominently from his meager head, that I saw in a moment he had made one of those rapid strides towards the grave which are never retraced by the foot of age.

The irresolute manner in which he kept shifting the papers on the table beside him, after we had taken our seats, betrayed that he was ill at ease. There was something on his mind which he evidently knew not how to bring out.

We talked over the untoward state of the weather, the badness of the season for sportsmen, the absence of several leading families of the neighbourhood. But it could not be to listen to all this, I was summoned back by the butler. On alluding with regret to Mrs. Stanley's health, I fancied I had touched the right chord. Even then, however, his sympathy was demonstrated by a slight cough, and a tinge of red streaking his sallow cheek.

"I have been persuading her to try Brighton," said he. "I am convinced this place does not agree with her. At this season of the year, it is damp and dull."

"And cannot you prevail on her to make the trial?"

Mr. Stanley shook his head.

"Like all invalids, she is averse to exertion. My wife maintains that home is the best place for sick people."

"I cannot fancy her really ill," said I. "At this time of year, when out-of-door

pleasures are at an end, ladies are apt to find their time in the country hang a little heavy; and want of spirits is often mistaken for want of health."

"Had you seen Mrs. Stanley lately," interrupted my host, "you would perceive that her illness arises from something more than *ennui*.—She is sadly altered, sadly altered! When I remember what she was last spring,—when I"—he paused, as if overcome by some inward struggle of feeling. "But our health and happiness lie at the disposal of a will that is inscrutable!"—added he, with a tremulous lip. "God's will be done!"

"At Mrs. Stanley's age, my dear sir, a few weeks' indisposition make no very alarming impression on the constitution," said I, hoping to comfort him. "When the spring breaks again, you will see her become as strong and brilliant as ever."

Again the gray head was impressively shaken.

"When the spring breaks," said he, "it

will come too late, unless her friends second my endeavours to restore her to herself. We must all try to enliven her. It is a long time since you paid us a visit. It is a long time since Mr. Brookes paid us a visit. You must bring him here with you some morning —the sooner the better."

The murder was out. The deadly paleness which converted Mr. Stanley's head into the semblance of a marble bust the moment the words were out of his mouth, convinced me of the effort it had cost him to propose what he probably regarded as the only means of saving the life, or reason, of his unhappy wife. And touching indeed was his forbearance towards that young creature, whom he "pitied, even as a father pitieth his own children."

Unwilling to mislead him by false expectations, I told him I would deliver his invitation to my friend; but that my present visit was one of adieu.—"I was about to spend my Christmas in Suffolk."

Right difficult I found it, when thus alluding to my approaching happiness, to subdue my voice and manner so as not to wound the feelings of one to whom the aspect of joy was beginning to be painful.

"On my return to Windsor," said I, on rising to take leave, "I trust to find your anxiety relieved."

"Shall you be long absent?"—said he, extending his hand.

"My leave expires in February. By that time, no doubt, Mrs. Stanley will be completely restored to health."

He did not say a word. A pressure of the hand was his silent token of farewell. But never did I see a human countenance more expressive of misery than his, when endeavouring to assume a kindly smile as I quitted the room.

It was difficult for me at that moment to find compassion for any human being. The supreme happiness of seeing my Harriet

again, after a year's separation, seemed to invest the whole earth with sunshine. Nevertheless, as I made my way back to Windsor, it was impossible not to feel deeply for the man whose declining years had been thus wantonly blighted for ever.

Unblinded, however, by the uxorious weakness of poor Stanley, I experienced little sympathy in the illness of his wife. My faith in the sensibility of flirting married women, was not such as to inspire me with serious apprehensions on her account. I thought her far more likely to recover her health and spirits, if left to herself and her indulgent husband, than by renewing the visits of one who had ceased to love, and had never respected her.

At all events, so certain was I that Brookes himself would derive no benefit from a renewal of the intimacy, that I determined to leave Mr. Stanley's commission unexecuted. It was more than probable he might not

find courage or means to renew the invitation.

And now, gentle reader, if you have humanity enough in your heart to find pleasure in the sight of perfect happiness—a spectacle which, from the days of Milton's Satan, has been held a sore trial to the evil-minded,—be pleased to accompany me in my visit to Mandevale Park. Yet I have some scruple in making the request. On paper, lovers have always appeared to me as tedious as a law-deed; and even Lovelace and St. Preux might be abridged, with advantage, of half their ecstasies.

But in ecstasies, neither Harriet nor myself were of a nature to indulge. Feverish as was the excitement of my mind during every mile of the journey, no sooner was I in her presence, than I felt subdued into that peaceful, happy consciousness of joy, which beings of a superior order invariably inspire.

The first words addressed to me by Lord

Mandevale were, however, dispiriting enough. "Welcome, a thousand welcomes, my dear Percy!" cried he. "We've got a famous party waiting for you, and expect to have twice as merry doings as last year. Lady Mandevale has a project for getting up some French plays: and we are to have the Dauntsons and Trevors, next week.—I'd half a mind, by the way, to write and ask young Brookes to accompany you, who is said to be a first-rate hand at that sort of thing.—But, as we do not see quite so much as we used of the family at Oak Hill, I thought it might create embarrassment."

"Is there any coldness, then, between Lady Mandevale and the Brookeses?" said I.

"Why, between ourselves, *a little!*—Poor Donnington, you know, is a near kinsman of my wife. And we do not consider that he was handsomely used."

"Lord Donnington?"—said I, luckily recollecting in time that I had no business to know anything about the matter.

"He proposed, you know, to Miss Brookes —oh! I forgot—it was some time after you were here last year. Well! he *did* propose, as I said before; and, considering that Harriet has nothing, or next to nothing, it would have been a great match for her.—*She* did not think so.—There is no accounting for tastes; and, between ourselves, I sometimes fear she has set her mind upon that great lubberly fellow, William Dauntson—at least he is the only man to whom I ever saw her give encouragement.—At all events, she refused poor Donnington; and in anything but a gracious manner."

"Which Lady Mandevale resents!"

"No—not exactly *that*. A woman has a right of choice; and does a kinder thing by refusing a man she doesn't like, than by making him a repining wife. But what vexed us was that her brother kept encouraging and holding out hopes to the poor fellow, so that

when Harriet spoke out firmly, the blow almost drove him out of his senses."

"But surely you ought to visit this upon Barty, rather than upon Oak Hill?"

"Oh! the coldness is quite as much on their side as ours. Perhaps they are tired of us, or perhaps they are afraid of meeting Donnington.—But they come here so much less than they used, that Lady Mandevale has almost ceased to trouble them with invitations."

This was a bad beginning; but, having observed to my good-natured host that, as Lord Donnington was no cousin of mine, he must not take it amiss if I renewed my acquaintance on the morrow with the family of my friend Barty—"Of course not—of course not!" cried he. "On the contrary, you must try to enlist Harriet for our private theatricals. Perhaps now you are come, (who were always so great a favourite of the old lady!) you

may contrive to persuade her to be more sociable."

Of course I promised; and, according to my announcement, lost not a moment the following day in executing my commission. Before the breakfast was quite removed, away I went, like "an arrow from a Tartar's bow," to Oak Hill!

And, oh! the delight of that winter's walk!

"The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields,"

arrayed in their vernal pride, may afford the fairest aspect of nature. But, in my heart of hearts, I own I prefer a winter landscape. A vast expanse of snow — a lake sheeted with ice—a forest, whose rimy boughs appeared enwrought in silver coral, possess a thousand charms for one whose first and only passion is associated with leafless trees, skaits, sledges, and snowballs!—I found the fireside at Oak Hill warm and cozy as ever; and as the old lady entertained as little suspicion as her neighbour at the Park of the

real motive of her niece's refusal of Lord Donnington, she received me with open arms, as the friend of the graceless but favourite nephew, who took care that her arms should never close around himself. By Harriet I was welcomed with less demonstration; but when I saw her pass her hands over her eyes, as she bent over her work-box during the loquacious inquiries of Mrs. Brookes concerning the pursuits and avocations of Barty, I was satisfied!

Never weary of hearing all I found it prudent to relate, the old lady chose to call in the old servant who had tended the childhood of her nephews and niece; and who, like other old nurses, persisted in calling her charge "Master Barty," and the visitor announced to her as his brother officer, as "Captain."

But though careful to talk to *them* only of his progress in his regiment, and popularity in the neighbourhood of Windsor, it grieved me sorely that I could not confide to my dear

Harriet my uneasiness concerning her brother. Had she been wholly mine, I should have persuaded her to exercise her better influence over his heart, and make him sensible of the enormity of sacrificing the whole happiness of a life, nay, of many lives, merely that a rainy day might hang less heavily on his hands. His sister would have agreed with *me*, that Emmy's conduct towards him did not justify such random vengeance against the sex.

But of the peculiar cause of estrangement between Barty and his sister-in-law, nothing was known at Oak Hill. In the course of the summer Harriet and her aunt had paid a visit to Wrenhurst, and received the most favourable impression of the domestic happiness of Sir Robert and Lady Brookes. Their children were beautiful. Their establishment was arranged with a degree of comfort and order that would have done honour (the approving aunt observed,) to older heads;

and, by prudent management, the baronet had made considerable additions to his paternal estate. After hearing all which, it was impossible not to feel that, however blameable her want of candour, the Wandsworth romp had ample justification for her change of mind.

Notwithstanding my deep interest in every possible detail concerning the family which was to be eventually my own, the reader will conceive that it must have been a little tantalizing to sit watching the speaking countenance of one's plighted love; varying, from the paleness produced by deep emotion at one's entrance, to the most vivid tints and sparkling smiles. It was like witnessing a sunrise from some Alpine height. Before I had been half an hour in the room, her beautiful face acquired a thousand charms; for no toilet that coquetry and cosmetics ever devised is half so great a beautifier to a woman, as the presence of the man she loves.

I tried not to fix my eyes *too* fondly on her. I endeavoured to *seem* to listen while the old lady was acquainting me with the admirable arrangements of her nephew's model farm. I did my best to forget that the graceful girl beside me, whose voice murmured like music in my ears and whose breath almost reached my cheek, was my own—my plighted wife,—who had renounced for my sake all with which rank and fortune entrance the vanity of her sex.

But never shall I forget the commotion in my heart when old Nanny made her re-appearance, with a lamentable appeal to the ladies in favour of a child belonging to a numerous family in the village, who, having met with a bad accident, was brought by its mother for their advice.

I could have killed Harriet for the zeal with which she started up, and volunteered her assistance. But, in matters of the medicine-chest the old lady was luckily jealous

of her prerogative; and, after a thousand apologies about leaving me alone, (to which I replied by professing myself on the point of departure, and declaring that I would wait only till I heard her opinion of the poor little boy,) she assured Harriet, exactly as I expected, that *her* assistance in the case was superfluous.

Away she went; and Nanny closed the door, and we were at length — (*at length!*) alone!—

CHAPTER VIII.

Even when alone together, looks, no utterance can define,
Mark'd now and then soul-wanderings, that proved her half divine:
High treasure, ten times treasur'd, for not seeming wholly mine.

COVENTRY PATMORE.

The news I had to learn from Harriet, in return for my protestations of grateful affection, were far from consolatory. The visit to Wrenhurst had been devised by her anxious aunt for the purpose of enlisting the heads of the family in the cause of Lord Donnington; and all that fraternal prudence could suggest was urged by Sir Robert in the way of warning and remonstrance.

Every relation—every friend she possessed

in the world, in short, was leagued against me. But, with that delicious obstinacy of her sex which, when practised by our own, we dignify with the name of firmness, the more they set before her the glories of Donnington Castle and the merits of its master, the more she steeled her heart against them all !—

It would be late in the day of this gray-haired, decrepid, mossy, fossil old world, to attempt an analysis of the nature of love. But it does not remain a less incomprehensible thing to those who come into it green and young, that a feeling should arise between two persons, often at first sight, often in defiance of an utter incompatibility of circumstances, age, habits, and opinions, often without a single pretext or argument in its favour,—yet so potent in its influence as to enable them to triumph over time and tide, and human pride and human vanity, which are stronger than both.

And how thoroughly does this overweening sentiment suffice for the happiness of the unhappy! The same Providence which has enriched with precious gums and exquisite flowers the most torrid and pestilential climes, seems to have taken pleasure in adorning the barren waste of life with a charm that angels might envy.

Forgive me, kind reader. I will not rhapsodize again! But admit that some indulgence is due to the enthusiasm of a young soldier, re-united after a year's absence to a lovely girl whose fidelity has defied the influence of both reason and authority, and preferred an ensign's shako to the pearly coronet of a peer!—

After that day, I had little difficulty in smoothing matters between Mandevale and Oak Hill. They stood too much in need of each other to be irreconcileable. The first inquiry of every guest at the Park was after that charming Miss Brookes, so much the

more "charming" for being unknown to the hackneyed haunts of London, Brighton, and Cowes. Harriet was a person incapable of wounding the self-love of any human being, (except poor Lord Donnington!) and she was consequently a general favourite. There was something almost maternal in Lady Mandevale's mode of kissing her on the forehead, by way of welcome back, the first time the Brookeses joined our dinner party.

But, though I could discern a degree of affectionate reproach in her smile, all hope in her kinsman's favour was evidently not extinct.

Thenceforward we met daily; and what so free from suspicion as the tête-à-têtes one contrives for oneself in the midst of a large party in a country house! The experience of the preceding Christmas had rendered me *au fait* to all the advantages of my position. I knew the exact position of doors and windows at Mandevale; and could calculate as

accurately as Sir Isambart Brunel from which of the sofas in the drawing-room the conservatory was imperceptible, and what turns of the shrubbery were safe from being overlooked by the house. I managed it so expertly, that, though abiding in the same drawing-room, not once in the course of the evening did the old lady at the whist-table obtain a glimpse of her niece.

The grand question of our discussions was whether or not to throw ourselves on the mercy of Mrs. Brookes. Harriet complained sadly of the misery and shame of duplicity towards one to whose kindness she was so deeply indebted; and, with the generous confidence of her sex, relied sufficiently on the influence of affection to plead her cause with her excellent kinswoman, who would be displeased, doubtless, and resentful for a while, but yield in time to the memory of the wretchedness to which her own life had been condemned by an ill-fated attachment. Less

expansive and less confident in my nature, *I* thought otherwise; and, dreading the issue of some fatal interdiction that would terminate all intercourse between us, implored her to preserve our secret for the present.

The sequel proved that she was right. Alas! women are the only interpreters of the hearts of their own sex!

Meanwhile, the disappointment experienced by the Mandevales in matchmaking, in the case of Harriet and Lord Donnington, had not disgusted them with the vocation. A Christmas party in a country-house would, in fact, fall flat, unless a little of that sort of thing were going on. And as they could *not*, without treachery to their kinsman, exercise their skill in favour of Miss Brookes, they unluckily selected myself as the victim of their matrimonial machinations.

Among their guests was a rich widow—really a charming person,—a person with whom it pleased me to see my Harriet asso-

ciate, and I need say no more in her favour. But as they *did* from preference associate, and I was naturally a third party in the group, it followed that those who judged me incapable of underhand attentions to her whom they had marked out for Lady Donnington, attributed my assiduities to a secret passion for Lady Georgiana Trench.

What a treasure-trove was such a conceit to my friend Mandevale! From the moment the notion entered his head, he could scarcely rest in his bed for the delight of anticipating a match made up under his roof. For many years, no such catastrophe had been heard of. It was not a marrying neighbourhood; and I sometimes thought he felt ashamed of having so near his gates as Oak Hill a couple of spinsters, for whom he was unable to provide appropriate mates.

But by marrying me—me, a poor lieutenant in the Guards, the younger brother of a needy Irish peer, to a widow with a clear

four thousand per annum and one of the prettiest places in the county, he should rub off all his disgraces. The obloquy thrown on his honour would be redeemed.

His lordship's manœuvres to place us together every day at dinner, and every morning in the droschky, soon became insupportable. But that Lady Georgiana was a clear-sighted, well-bred woman, she would, perhaps, have attributed to *me* connivance in the interested projects of our friend; and though no mouther of fine phrases, it cost me as much eloquence in arraignment of the baseness of fortune-hunting, and the misery of unequal matches, as might have set up a score or two of writing-masters' copies, in order to make her comprehend that I was above taking part in Lord Mandevale's nefarious designs.

But though eager to set her right on that score, I could not (to the Mandevales and the rest of the party,) signalize as strongly as I wished the indifference of my feelings

towards Lady Georgiana; lest they might surmise that a man of my age could scarcely live on so intimate a footing with so charming a woman, unmoved by her attractions, unless guarded by the pre-engagement of his heart.

What she herself thought on the subject, I will not pretend to decide. I suspect that, as is often the case with women who have lived in the world, and tasted of the fruit of good and evil, she considered Harriet too *borné* to exercise much influence. By nature an enthusiast—an enthusiast who wrote charming verses, and painted in oils,—the eternal stitchery of Oak Hill appeared to Lady Georgiana mere waste of time, and the evidence of a limited capacity; nor could she refrain from endeavouring to incite the taste of her young friend towards higher ambitions, and pursuits more intellectual and refined.

But it might not be. The gentle temper and well-regulated spirit of my Harriet were

not to be disturbed from their serenity. Lady Georgiana might have as well attempted to endow the swan with the instincts of the eagle, or produce the foam and sparkle of a cataract in some level stream! Harriet was essentially a home-staying, heart-comforting, trouble-assuaging woman, born to create and enjoy a quiet household. The cultivation of her own mind for self-enjoyment, she would have regarded as an indulgence almost criminal. The tumultuous passions and high-soaring sentiments described by the accomplished widow as the ennobling atmosphere of genius and heroism, appeared to her as ideal as the visions of an alchymist; and after sundry infructuous endeavours to elevate the aspirations of one who smiled so like an angel, and yet was of the earth, earthy, Lady Georgiana left her to herself.

The enthusiast did not perceive that, while *her* spirit was soaring into the clouds, the pure mind of Harriet had attained still higher

elevation, and was safe in the Heaven of heavens !—

"You must help us to make up a marriage, my dear Hatty, between our friend, poor Percy, here, and the pretty widow," said Lord Mandevale, who had resumed all his former fatherly familiarity with Miss Brookes, partly from the kindliness of his own nature, and partly from the conciliation of hers. "They will make charming neighbours for us, if we can get them to marry and settle at The Danes. Lady Georgy's present whimwhams about summering in Switzerland and wintering in Italy, would soon give place to good, sober, English roast-mutton ideas of domestic life, if she had only an attached, steady, agreeable husband, like Percy, to keep her company at home."

We both smiled; that is, we both tried to smile. Nay, we really accomplished the difficult feat, when his lordship set to work, with all his arithmetic, to calculate the num-

ber of acres Lady Georgiana was possessed of, and the value per acre of her land, as an inducement to me to sit by her at dinner, and suffer myself to be beat by her at billiards.

"You can't deny that she is a sweet pretty creature, Percy?" cried he, in the warmth of his zeal. "Bless you! in poor Trench's time, scarcely a man in the county but was in love with her. Poor Trench was sometimes half out of his wits for jealousy! But she's sown her wild oats *now*. She's quiet enough *now*. She's found out the real purposes of life *now*; and with her handsome fortune, and the good connections of both (to say nothing of agreeableness and popularity), you'd have the pleasantest house in the county. And I'll tell you what, Percy, my boy!—If you and I were to unite in preserving the game at Braseley and Missenden, there wouldn't be such pheasant-shooting in England!"

I was half inclined to humour his weak-

ness, by way of throwing dust in his eyes. But I knew I should lower myself in those of Harriet, by even the smallest attempt at deception.

I soon grew frightened, however, lest Lady Georgiana, instead of having *her* eyes blinded, should see straight into the truth of the case; for there is nothing like wounded vanity for quickening a woman's perceptions in such matters.

The fair widow, for instance, was a tremendous musician. I use the word "tremendous" advisedly; for such sublime execution as hers always inspires me with awe—awe, too, unmixed with any pleasanter sensation. Her natural talents had been perfected in the course of those foreign wild flyings, so much objected to by Lord Mandevale; and during a winter at Vienna, she had acquired the mastery of Beethoven's counterpoint, and learned to dash through the rhapsodies of Liszt and Thalberg, as though

possessing as many hands as Briareus. A squadron of Prussian dragoons galloping up and down the piano, would not have produced greater execution.

Even vocal music she contrived to render disagreeable, per force of perfection. The scale of Lady Georgiana's voice enabled her to take the part of Donna Anna in Don Juan, or the *Königinn von Nacht* in the Zauberflöte; and whenever any supremely difficult and frightful bravura was inflicted on the musical world, she was sure to get it by heart, and astonish even orchestras and professors.

Such exhibitions in private life ought, in my opinion, to be put down by act of parliament! Not one person in two hundred but finds them insupportable; and when Lady Georgiana, led away by her wild enthusiasm, was indulging in her vocal or instrumental skirmishings, the country gentlemen used to look absolutely panic-struck.

To bear it with more than submission, was out of my power. And I admit that I often seized the opportunity afforded by the *fortissimo* in her concertos, or the *point d'orgue* upon an upper F, in her bravuras, to steal out of the room on pretence of consulting the weather-glass that hung in the vestibule adjoining the music-room.

She saw me, of course; for movements of that kind are never overlooked by the person who is singing. Liszt left off playing at the royal concert at Bröhl, because the Queen of England was seen to whisper. Lady Georgiana did not follow his example—I wish she *had!* But it did not escape her that I sat breathless and entranced whenever Miss Brookes, who knew nothing of music except how to make it agreeable, acceded to Lady Mandevale's request for a ballad;—some old thing she had learned by ear from her aunt, or old nurse,—or the simple strain of some old-fashioned poet, which she had adapted to

a melody of her own, and sang with a voice as small and sweet as a shepherd's pipe.

She was not fond of singing before strangers. But the Mandevales were not to be refused. And as, during my visits to Oak Hill, however long and frequent, I found it pleasanter to listen to talking "far above singing," than to singing sweeter than any other kind of music, I could never manage to look otherwise than enraptured while listening at the Hall to those pure and simple notes which I never heard elsewhere.

One night, I overheard Lady Georgiana, in the blindness of her vanity, propose to give Miss Brookes some lessons in music, to enable her to accompany herself in a more scientific manner; and the country schoolmaster's offer to Charles Lamb to teach him how to write an essay, occurring to me at the moment, an involuntary smile betrayed what was passing in my mind.

"I see now why Lord Donnington was re-

whispered she to Harriet, as soon
s they took their candles at the
ment to retire to bed; "and why
l of the Coldstream finds Mandevale
much pleasanter, every Christmas,
Halls and Castles belonging to his
uncles and cousins. But do not
my dear! I am not going to peach!
ot going to turn aunt's evidence!"—
she, on perceiving her little friend
ale as death, when at that moment
okes approached them. "You de-
hough, Harriet, for being so close with
en you saw me fall in love with you at
, and open my heart, as wide as if it
anything worth showing, you ought
ven me a hint of the truth."
ure you"—Harriet was beginning.
don't assure me!" interrupted Lady
a, "for when you assume that de-
e, I do not believe a syllable that
ut of your mouth. But thank your

stars, little hypocrite, that you are let off so easily! Do you remember Turenne's declaration to the young officer who had attempted to try his courage by a false alarm? —'Had you convicted me of cowardice, young man, I would have killed you on the spot!'— Believe me, if I had been betrayed into a liking for this very likeable Percy of yours— (a thing by no means unlikely—for the Mandevales have been wooing me in his behalf ever since I arrived here,) never would I have forgiven you!—Luckily the ball has only grazed the skin, and I can afford to be merciful!"

Merciful, she was. For the following day, she spoke to me on the subject even more explicitly than she had done to Harriet; and as I had the grace to plead guilty at once to the soft impeachment of being desperately in love, a warm auxiliary was enlisted in our cause.

"We fairies never injure men
Who dare to tell us true!"

quoted the lovely widow, by way of rejoinder to my confidences. "Thank you for having trusted to my magnanimity. A blockhead, like my cousin Lord James, (a brother officer of yours, is he not?) would have fancied he was wounding my vanity. Whereas your frank avowal of an attachment to Miss Brookes has healed the previous wound. But for *that*, your wry faces when I was singing and playing for your amusement, had been vastly impertinent! But men in love are privileged to be deaf, blind, and absent; and a host of minor offences, on your part, are pardoned in favour of your disorder."

She was as good as her word in keeping our secret—nay, better. For she gave us the best advice, and promised all the aid that was compatible with her desire not to offend such kind friends as our host and hostess, by overthrowing the hopes of their kinsman.

But, like dear Harriet, she insisted on the wisdom of candour. As she truly observed,

no one could compel Miss Brookes either to marry Lord Donnington, or break with me. She was of an age to exercise her own judgment and veto.

"Do not shrink from a fair examination of the state of the case," persisted Lady Georgiana, "or deceive yourselves by building castles in the air. Harriet Brookes, who does not, like your humble servant, bewilder her brains by reading Hegel and Göethe, has no pretext for being ignorant of the exact number of shillings that are contained in a sovereign, or the exact number of butcher and bakers' bills that will be contained in a year!"

"Believe me," said I, "we have looked our prospects steadily in the face—"

"And what are they like?"

"Very like two hundred a-year on Harriet's side, and three hundred and fifty on mine! Not much more than the rent of a good opera-box!" said I, perceiving that she shrugged her shoulders.

"But you have expectations?—Most people have expectations—"

"A few more hundreds a-year will come to me on the death of my grandmother,

> A stepdame and a dowager,
> Long withering out a young man's revenue,

though eighty years of age."

"Yes; I remember Lord Mandevale enumerating the grandmother to me, in his catalogue of your perfections!" cried her ladyship, laughing. "A thousand a-year, then, constitutes the very utmost limits of your hopes?"

"Nearly so. But is it not enough for happiness?—I should sell out of the Guards to realize every guinea in my power to settle upon Harriet. And if Mrs. Brookes would consent to our residing with her at Oak Hill, we should all be the happiest people in the world."

"Of course, while the honeymoon lasted. But a thousand a-year, with a whole houseful

of little Harriets and Percies, crying for bread and butter.—Well, well! we will talk no more about it, just now," cried she, perceiving that I was annoyed. "But I have altered my counsels about confiding all to our aunt or appealing to Sir Robert Brookes. Time enough, when you are in possession of the dowager's jointure. You will *then* be able to look the Brookes' family a little more dignifiedly in the face."

"And you literally expect," said I, "that I should go on contenting myself with a yearly meeting? You fancy I can wait till next Christmas, before I again behold all I value upon earth?"

"I dare say you would both survive it!" retorted the provoking little widow. "But I propose better things for you. Nothing would be easier for you both than a mid-summer meeting at The Danes. Leave it to *me*. I will work on the good opinion of the old lady and secure the promise of a visit.

ven six months' absence too much?
able wretch!—I have a great mind
your affairs to take care of them-
r perhaps invite Lord Donnington
he Brookeses in your place!—"
rue to her word, I saw her that very
propose a game of picquet to the
lady, whom she had hitherto treated
of the chairs or tables.
fore I had half done thanking her
eart, my attention was suddenly
rom my own affairs by reading in
paper, under cover of which I had
my post of observation, an an-
ent of the decease of "Harman
Esq., F.R.S. and F.A.S., of Lisbon
n the county of Berks, aged 62,
egretted by a numerous circle of

—Poor Stanley, *dead!*—leaving his
wife, no doubt, sole heiress of his
! What an influence might this

circumstance exercise over the fortunes of Barty!—What a crisis in the life of the favourite brother of my dear Harriet!

How I longed to confide to her all I knew on the subject, and all that I surmised! But I dared not. With her, it was impossible to hint at that which was so lightly treated among my habitual associates.

I was even debarred from inquiring of Barty, as I could have wished, the circumstances of poor Stanley's death, and the circumstances in which it had left his widow. How was I to address him from Mandevale Hall without alluding to his sister?—And alas! to write of Harriet without writing out of the abundance of my heart, was out of the question!—

CHAPTER IX.

e cesse où commence le crime.
croyez, Messieurs, qu'on peut impunément,
ses vils desseins d'un air de badinage,
la paix, au bonheur d'un ménage?
t léger, on devient criminel.
'un honnête homme, est un poids eternel.
CASIMIR DELAVIGNE.

I got back to Windsor, Barty had
ed, on leave. Nobody seemed to
ctly whither. His letters were to
ded to his agent's.

as vexatious enough, for I was at
ous to ascertain the position of his
d whether there were any reasonable
ment to confide to him the state of
As to learning from my brother-

officers what he had been about during my absence, one man could talk of nothing, in answer to my inquiries, but the runs of the buckhounds; another had taken a grudge against his commanding-officer, and found a thousand petty injuries to complain of; stories about drills and parades, concerning which I cared not a straw. Then, there had been amateur theatricals at Windsor, got up for some infirmary; and the old-standing jealousy between the guards and life-guards was strongly illustrated in the criticisms by which the jack-boots were belaboured by our fellows. I had, in short, a hundred bad jokes to laugh at, and a hundred stupid grievances to deplore, before I could be allowed a question in return.

At length, I ventured the name of Lisbon House.

"What! had I not heard of old Stanley's death? Surely he must have been declining before I went away?—Well, he started off

ıd gallop, and reached darky before
heard a word about the matter.
dy was sorry when he went off. For
was a good old fellow for a book-
nd gave capital Madeira."
l his wife?"
widow?—Oh, his widow," they sup-
was, like other widows, playing pro-
There was an achievement up, and
se seemed closed. Mrs. Stanley was
gone elsewhere for change of

ind misgiving me that her departure
t of Barty might have been simul-
I resolved to pursue my further
on the morrow at Datchet. My
estion regarded Larch Lodge; and on
nt they were better informed. Every
son of them could prate of the
out of the heiress!—
Juckesons were gone to Brighton.
ckesons were a sad loss. If old

Juckeson had been on the spot at the time of the garrison theatricals, he would have come down with a twenty-pound note for his box!"

"And the fair Sabina?"

"The fair Sabina had refused Wrottesley, of the Life Guards, and sent to the rightabout Sir Claudius Hogg's eldest son,—the man with the fine park at Sunning Hill;—both excellent matches."

"Miss Juckeson has perhaps an attachment?" said I. And the conscious, self-complacent air with which every man present either cast down his eyes, or pulled up his shirt collar, convinced me that each believed himself to be the favoured man.

Thus left in doubt whether the mysterious absence of Barty were attributable to heiress-hunting or widow-consoling, I took care not to mention his name in my first letter to Oak Hill. There was no occasion. I had plenty of other things to write about.

In the first place, I could have filled a

vith expressions of disgust at the
into which I was forced to re-
e myself, after the tranquil hap-
d graceful refinement which had
pacitating me for my professional

ose I shall be called spoony for the
; but I own I have always loathed
y of my own sex. Men by them-
l in numbers, are the greatest beasts
Like trees, they require thinning
the plantation, to acquire anything
ty of proportion; and it is only by
g with women, that the higher quali-
heir nature are developed. The
articles acquire too much prepon-
when fed with nothing but cigars,
nd-water, and the unlicensed gossip
orhood.

a few days — and, above all, a few
— at Windsor, I felt that I would
n my right hand to spend a single

hour in listening to the voice of Harriet. Even one of Lady Georgiana's bravuras had been as the music of the spheres, compared with the fifty-times told mess anecdotes to which I was forced to give my attention.

But at the end of those few days, I was so much worse off than before, that even a rubber of whist, with Lady Mandevale for partner (who never revoked less than three times in a deal), would have been a pleasant alternative. Lord James, who had been spending a week with some people near Henley,—one of those ten-spare-bed sort of country-families who fill their house with produceable young men and girls, whenever there is a ball in the neighbourhood, came back to the regiment.

I had long come to an understanding with myself, that he was a disagreeable fellow; a fellow, who, like the monkeys, could not eat his nuts in peace without pelting other people with the shells. But one of the most important branches of military duty is to put

he disagreeableness of one's brother-
and, as Lord James's barrack-room
my own, we lived together on a
gown-and-slipper system of inti-
ating each other, in tones and on
friendship, with home-truths, in
t of which, throats have been cut ere

sometimes pondered, by the way,
he boundless freedom of bantering,
the order of the day, be not the
the disarmed condition of modern
When every gentleman wore a
eople did not hazard what is called
ang-mongers "taking a rise out of
is the practice in these our times,
llenges, like bills of exchange, are
three days' sight.
Percy, my boy!" was his uncere-
salutation, the day after his arrival,
variable principles, it seems, have
ake? The protestations about love

in a cottage, with which you have been stunning us for this year past, all end with a long shot at the jointure of my fair cousin, Lady Georgiana Trench!—What a rogue you are to what I am!"

I longed to knock him down. But, as I could have done no worse had his accusation been true, I contained myself.

"May I inquire to whom you are indebted for this interesting intelligence?" said I, with a forced smile.

"To what the newspapers would call 'my own correspondent' in Suffolk."

"Then let me tell you," said I, losing my temper, "that your own correspondent is—"

"Softly, softly," cried he, taking me by the arm, and patting me on the back, as nurses do to prevent a child from choking. "No big words,—no ugly words! For my own correspondent in Suffolk is no other than my cousin Georgy herself."

she told you that I was making up

ou suppose a woman ever sits down,
lood, to disclose anything of the
n to her cousin the Guardsman?
she contented herself with writing
r (headed with, 'private and con-
the words being underscored till
ed like St. Lawrence's gridiron, or
Kent, marked with the lines of the
ition south-eastern railways), beg-
ow your character in the regiment,
iffuseness of catechization on the
uch as ladies use only respecting a
n they are going to engage as coach-
usband."

ow do you know that Lady Geor-
no thoughts of me in the former
" said I, the moment I perceived
s her ladyship's indiscreet zeal for
ness of her young friend Harriet,
d exposed me to this absurd im-

"Because the little widow is much too fond of keeping the whip in her own hands! She tormented her late husband into a mad-house,—though I admit that he gave some proof of incipient insanity by choosing her as a wife. However, if The Danes be your only resource against the Bench, and it is either a jointure or the benefit of the Insolvent act, depend upon it you will meet with no opposition from *me!* I wrote her word that you were honest, sober, and cleanly, and could have an undeniable character from your last place, which you left from having a few words with the lady's maid."

"Thank you."

"Don't look so confoundly affronted! What better are we than our brethren of the shoulder-knot?

> Les soldats, aujourdhui, sont des valets de guerre
> Qu'on habille en livrée de la couleur du roi."

"Did you acquaint Barty Brookes," said I,—sauntering to the window, and looking

rnestly into the barrack-yard as if
ever seen it before—" that Lady
a had written to you for my cha-

I!—Barty had affairs enough of his
n his hands, without needing to be
with yours."
re I got my leave, Larch Lodge left
little leisure," said I.—" For my
ould as soon be tied to the tail of a
as dance attendance on a finished
like Miss Juckeson."
selon!—When a man is making
fortune,—or a jointure,—he must
his pains."
kes is gone to Brighton, then, after
esons?"
should I know?—*He* does not write
s marked 'private and confidential,'
ould tell you.—I suspect however,—
nly say *suspect*—that he is gone after
-but simply out of somebody's way."

"She is to be confined early in the spring."

"I see it all now!" cried I,—hoping to prevent a more explicit allusion either to the past or the future.

"Aware of the impossibility of proving the illegitimacy of the child,—aware that even his wife's avowal of her conduct would avail him nothing,—aware that, publish his dishonour as he might, nothing could prevent an infant born in wedlock from inheriting the fortune secured by settlement to his heirs,—he did the delinquents the favour of rushing out of the world and placing the bantling in enjoyment of the property the moment it sees the light."

"What a tissue of misery and guilt!" burst involuntarily from my lips.

"Say rather what a tissue of vice and folly!"—cried Lord James,—"Mrs. Stanley has acted like an idiot. Mrs. Stanley had the game in her hands. If, instead of playing the Magdalen when no one asked her,

king the suspicions of the old
by tearing her hair and weeping her
ut, she had redoubled her atten-
n, Stanley would have become the
men and fathers, instead of dying
nd leaving her a double burthen

Where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise:

ore than folly—it is wickedness on
those who curse us by enlighten-

o business of mine to war with his
My thoughts just then were with
s.

y, the soldier who acted as Barty's
en he was with the regiment
a letter he had received from hi
gging I would have the goodness to
r him a few words that had been
e seal, relative to a pointer puppy
e dog-breaker's :—a message of no

interest, and requiring no answer. But what *was* a matter of interest,—to *me* at least,—was that, although no date was affixed to the letter, the postmark was that of a small town on the borders of Yorkshire,—the post town of Wrenhurst!—

Incredible!—Barty, who had so often sworn to me he would never set foot in his brother's house,—Barty, who had for four years past wholly alienated himself from his old home,—to be there, and there as it were, *en cachette*, at a moment when most of his intimates asserted him to be with the Juckesons at Brighton!—

Knowledge thus surreptitiously obtained, I scarcely felt to be honestly my own; and therefore determined that, however I might hear the matter questioned, the place of Barty's retreat should be a secret for *me*. He *must* have some strong motive for such mysterious seclusion.

Meanwhile, common charity, common de-

ompted me to proceed to Datchet,
mal inquiry after the health of one,
her more prosperous days, I had
und so hospitable.
s not curiosity, no, by heavens!
ot vulgar curiosity—I swear it was
motive that prompted me—after re-
the usual formal answer to my
after the health of Mrs. Stanley,—
the gray-headed butler, who was
much altered as his poor master at
ier visit, whether Mr. Stanley had
nuch in his last illness, and whether
een aware of his approaching end.
e in a very low voice, though he had
beyond the doorstep to address me,
was impossible for any one in the
overhear what passed between us.
he kept looking nervously back as he
me, in broken accents and with tears
in his eyes,—that his master had
rather suddenly—" though perhaps

not soon *enough*," added he, in a lower voice; "for he *did* suffer, sir, suffer very bitterly,—though too proud to show it."

"I thought him sadly changed when I called here last," said I. "He commissioned me to send one of my brother-officers to see him. But I scarcely thought him well enough for company."

"Then *that* must have been two months and a fortnight ago, sir," said the old man, musingly; "for it is just two months since we lost him; and for a fortnight before his death, he opened his lips to no one—no, not once after—after the cause of my mistress's illness was known. And I remember, that it was one evening after you had called, and Mrs. Stanley declined seeing you, that my master sent for the doctors to her, and all came out.—But God's will be done!"—

"She is still *here?*" said I, interrupting his nervous whisper into a fear of being overheard.

"My mistress is here for the present. They want to move her, sir. They fancy she would be better for change of air. In *my* opinion, it would kill her at once. With a trouble such as hers upon the mind, there is nothing like letting a person indulge their grief in their own way. Whenever I see her in tears, poor lady, I am glad, for I know it comforts her."

"But Mrs. Stanley has, of course, some one with her,—some relation,—some friend?"

"If she had had friends and relations, sir, maybe she would never have *been* Mrs. Stanley!" rejoined old Robson, shaking his head. "My mistress found no one to befriend her when she was a poor, destitute young lady. How much less now, when she is still poor, and has so many ready to cast a stone at her! 'Tis my belief, that the great cause of her taking on so terribly (which, in her situation, may have a worse influence than she dreams of), is the feeling herself so deserted, so forgotten, so all alone in the world."

The tears that now fell unchecked from the old man's shaggy eyelids convinced me that he was talking from his heart; and from the depths of mine came the impulse prompting me to entreat he would take in my card to Mrs. Stanley, inform her that I was come to inquire after her health, and whether I could be of the smallest assistance to her.

"She will not see you, sir. Ten to one, she will not even answer your message."

"Never mind—I shall have eased my conscience by the offer."

I almost feared, from the evident reluctance of the old servant to comply with my request, that he was about to make a feint of acquiescence, and that my message would never reach its destination. During the few minutes I remained awaiting him on the chilly doorsteps, convinced that he had proceeded no further than the oaken passage, I was making up my mind to address the same courtesies to Mrs. Stanley, by letter, on

rn to the barracks; when, lo! just
fixed my listless eyes on the golden
crocuses, which seemed to shed fac-
sunshine on the old-fashioned court,
alled to mind, by this token of re-
pring, the length of time which had
since I first noticed the saddened
f the place, old Robson re-appeared,
ace shining almost as bright as the
.

will see you, sir!—My mistress *will*
! I never should have thought it!
he had paused a minute over your
d message, as if not thoroughly com-
ling, she suddenly started up, and
e fetch you in."

rhaps it would be as well," said I, " if
her a few minutes' leisure to recover
for the effort of seeing a stranger?"

t by no means in the world, sir!" re-
he old man. " If she thought twice
it, may be she'd change her mind

either thinking folks might talk about the visit, or that she was not equal to the exertion. But well do I remember, sir, the first day as ever you came into this house, how much my poor master was taken with you, and how different he thought you from others, who were greater favourites; and how grieved he was the day he found out you were going on leave of absence. 'Another friend deserting me in my need!' said he, as he undressed that night. 'Somehow or other, I felt that young man to be almost a friend!'"

These touching reminiscences were not exactly calculated to raise my spirits, as a preliminary to the trying interview that awaited me; and I was almost choked by the pain in my throat, as I made my way on tiptoe, as if poor Stanley were still lying dead in the house, along that gloomy, old corridor. Let the reader despise me as he may, but I swear I had hardly courage to enter the cedar par-

which I was motioned by the agi-
man.

cted to hear the sound of sobs—I
to find Mrs. Stanley in tears—I was
for the painful excitement of a
t, though a surprise, it was no relief
elings to perceive her seated pre-
her wonted place, as if she had been
by her attendant, and wanted
to leave it.

e had no visible occupation. There
ooks near her,—no working or writing
.—She raised her eyes vacantly from
t when I entered; fixed them upon
moment, as if trying to understand
ose of my being there; and then,
same dull vacuity of countenance,
o a vacant chair.

tears, she looked as though her eyes
nsusceptible of that grateful moisture,
rning sands of the desert of evening

The widow's weeds in which she was attired had evidently been assumed with the same mechanical submission as the seat she was placed in. Poor creature,—poor Ethel!—She had ceased to hope,—she had ceased to *wish*, —except that God would please to shorten her days of probation. Let my readers call to mind the attenuated delicacy of feature of Canova's Magdalen,—the feeble, hopeless, self-abandonment of its countenance and attitude,—and they will see the poor widow quite as clearly as I was able to discern her through my blinding tears.

"You expressed a wish to see me," said she, at last, in a voice from which all tone and accent were extracted, so that it was as a voice from the dead.

"I was desirous of assuring you in person, my dear Mrs. Stanley," said I, bending towards her, and speaking nearly as low as herself, for she appeared too meek and fragile to be addressed like other people, "that if it

ıy power to save you any trouble or
ence, by officiating on any occasion
ehalf . . . ."

ently raised her feeble hands and
hem together, while uttering a few
te words, but not as if wishing to
me.

ve me," I therefore resumed, "it
ford me the sincerest satisfaction to
vice or comfort to one in whose situ-
deeply sympathize."

he send you to me?" said she,
ame half-articulate murmur; and,
d that I was, I was on the point of
whom she alluded. Another mo-
d I understood her.

ve not seen him these two months—
I had the pleasure of seeing your-
id I, comprehending only too well
alluded to my friend Brookes.

ught, perhaps, you came from *him!*"
d the poor creature, with a look of

ghastly disappointment, which I shall never forget. "I know he ought not to send to me.—I know he ought not to come to me;—that in *this* house a meeting between us would be sacrilege;—that there is not a spot on earth so far from my husband's grave as to admit of my holding his hand again in mine. —Still, it is *very* terrible to feel oneself quite forgotten, quite alone, with such memories as mine, with such prospects as mine!—I dare not quit this house, because elsewhere than in its quiet seclusion I might be seen and pointed at, and so want courage to bear out till the end. But you know not what it is to remain here. You know not what it is, in the hush of night, to fancy you hear voices — still, small voices, accusing you; and the shadows of those you love—that is, those you *once* loved,—for I love nothing, *nothing* now,—gliding betwixt you and the wall. This house was never a cheerful one," continued she, with a grievous smile. "But

not guess what it is now that I
opled it with such terrible recollec-

eed, dear Mrs. Stanley, you ought to
place!" pleaded I. "Your health,
ason will give way under such per-
xcitement."

Ethel shook her head mournfully, by
eply.

u are not in a natural state of body
," continued I; "and, so far from
ng in this gloomy spot, you want
of air,—you want change of scene."

ant nothing,—*nothing* but rest,—and
all soon have," rejoined the widow.
been unconsciously nursing a hope,
anishes as I listen to your quiet words,
ng so near him, he would at least take
easure to assure me that my suffer-
d shame were not a matter of in-
ce to him. But now that even that
ectation has left me....."

There was such deep despondency in her face, that I stupidly fancied I should be lessening the influence of Barty's ungrateful neglect, by apprizing her of his absence.

"Mr. Brookes is not at Windsor," said I; "nor will he be here again for weeks."

"And where, then, is he gone?"

"He left no address. His letters are forwarded to his agent's."

"He left no address?" cried she, justly interpreting this into a precaution lest she should molest him with letters. "But *somebody* must know where he is?" she continued, rousing herself from the reverie into which for a moment she had fallen. "Selfish as he is, he has friends. You yourself are his friend. Tell me therefore honestly, is he at Brighton with those people,—those people by whose fortune he was so shamefully dazzled,—those people who were the cause of all my distraction?"—

"The Juckesons?—certainly not!"

ven be thanked!—*That* is really beyond
s. But if you know so positively
s not there, you must surmise where
Do not fancy I wish to know it for
neable purpose.—I am not going to
him. I am not about to trouble him
He will have no care or molesta-
my account. But I want to be
ctly *where*, when the worst is over
an intimation of it might reach him,
fy his mind that he will be annoyed
on my account."

ce became slightly convulsed, and I
opes she was going to experience the
tears. I was mistaken. Her lips
, and she closed her eyes for a mo-
But it was only in the effort to sub-
anguish of some inward pang.

you will give me leave, dear Mrs.
' said I, fearing the interview was
g too much for her strength, "I will
quiries on the subject that interests

you, and to-morrow let you know the result."

Not that I had any intention of lending my aid towards a reconciliation between her and Barty; not that I was not fully aware of his being lost to her for ever; but the fragility of her state rendered it necessary to temporize.

"Suffer me to ring for your female attendant before I leave you," said I, perceiving that she had laid down her heavy head on the table near which she was sitting, as if unable to support herself. And, having hastily rung the bell, I took her unresisting hand between mine, and mingled with a thousand endearing words of consolation my repeated assurances that I would return the following day.

"I am afraid, sir, you found her worse than you expected," said Robson, who, as he guided me across the damp, chill hall, noted the depression of my feelings.

r was human being more heart-
said I.

yet, sir," rejoined the old man, in a
r whisper, "as yet, my poor, dear
not know the worst that is awaiting
y are afraid of telling her. The
ay that if she were to obtain an
the contents of the will, they would
er for the consequences. I heard
the executors so, when they wanted
her from the house."

not believe pecuniary troubles would
ier sufferings!" said I, as I quitted
. But I could not forbear adding
prayer to poor Robson's parting
on that—"God would temper the
the shorn-lamb!" Save in divine
hat hope for her *now!*—

CHAPTER X.

Dis moi, que je m'égare,
Dis qu'il veut m'éprouver, mais qu'il n'est point barbare.
Dis qu'il va revenir,—qu'il revient;—trompe moi,—
Mais obtiens qu'il me trompe à son tour, comme toi.
Va le lui demander,—va l'implorer!—Demeure,
L'orgueil est entre nous,—il glace,—il est mortel!—
Je sens qu'il me fuit, et qu'il faut que je meure.

DESBORDES-VALMORE.

I shall be blamed by many of my readers, but I trust forgiven by a few, when I admit that, the following day, I despatched to Wrenhurst Park a full, true, and particular account of all I had witnessed.

"Much as I applaud the principle," said I, "which doubtless prompted you to break off a connection already productive of such fatal results, I should not be justified if I

you to remain in ignorance of the
mind of this unhappy sufferer.
ould be your remorse, were she to
crifice to her despair at being thus
shaken off?"

he letter was despatched, I felt easier;
y mind misgave me that Barty would
e dilemma by returning no answer, as
had never reached his hand.

alas! the corroding influence of
ve and the total subjection of his
o the worship of the molten calf,
erted my friend Barty into a fine,
d-faced villain; and, so far from
from the correspondence, he wrote
n of post to apprize me that he was
to conceive what part I considered
rivileged to act in the business?

regards the lady whom you call, (as
e apt to be called in tribulations
through three volumes octavo,) a
jured victim,' I can only say that she

resembles the rest of her sex; ever ready to bring down mountains toppling on their heads, but to shriek and bewail themselves all the time they are falling. I shall cease even to pity her, seeing that she has engaged so doughty a champion as yourself; if indeed she ever deserved aught but congratulation on her riddance from a peevish, narrow-minded, old tyrant, who, if a monster for making her his wife, has at least made justifiable atonement by making her his widow. Has Mrs. Stanley already forgotten what a bore she used to think him?—I shall be back at Windsor, (as the adjutant might have informed you,) by the 10th of April; when I hope to hear a better report of the sick room; for it is plain you have taken out your diploma and are officiating as a dispenser of juleps. May you live to be knighted, and the shadows of your fair patients never be less!—

"I find Wrenhurst prodigiously improved. Lady Brookes has turned out a housewife of

able activity, without an idea or
beyond her park paling;—so you
she understood her vocation far
an I did. My brother meanwhile
ressed into a fox-hunting squire,—
nothing but to squeeze his tenants
wife, and leave an improved estate
rble monument to the parish. The
ks of the day 'ordered to lie on the
Wrenhurst, are 'The Muck Manual'
Farm;'—*chef-d'œuvres* by which John
and Blackwood endeavour to atone
orld of materialism which has suc-
the world of letters, for the sin of
nriched our literature with Adam
Don Juan.

nort, my dear Percy, the positive, in
solid sense, is the leading influence of
e family of Brookes; and if you find
in vein poetic, just now, I strongly
nd you to address yourself else-

How I longed to reply as it deserved to this coarse epistle! But to provoke a paper-war with the brother of Harriet, was a thing that required more courage than half a dozen duels. Better meet his flighty impertinence with silent contempt; and soothe by palliatives the suspense of Mrs. Stanley, till the arrival of the 10th of April, now at little more than three weeks' distance.

During that period, I often visited her—bringing tidings of, though no message from, the absent one. But as I had announced his early return, she was patient. She even suffered herself to be comforted by my sympathy. Comprehending from my vague hints that Barty was on a tour—at all events *not* at Brighton, (*that* was the essential point,) she waited.—Alas! how large a portion of every human life is squandered in waiting!—

I even prevailed upon her, one morning, when the sun shone as bright as if the spring, like a gay girl on the eve of her *début*, were

ent to make its appearance, to descend,
upon my arm, the flight of steps lead-
m the cedar parlour to the little garden.
the spot was not what it had been.
il as I once thought it, now that the
hioned close-shorn evergreens stood out
ved by lighter foliage, those shapely
id clipped arbor-vitæ made it look like
tery. Even the bright spring flowers,
as, and Persian violets, springing at
oot reminded one of the little unna-
patchwork parterres which French
plant around their graves.

Mrs. Stanley leaned heavily, *very*
on my arm; — for two months more,
was to be a mother. But before she
ccomplish a second turn of the smooth-
formal gravel-walk, so polished and
at one saw there was no longer a foot
ng to pace its dreary solitude,—she
so faint that I was the first to pro-
turning to the house. After all, she

judged rightly in secluding herself. Scarcely a fresh object on which she could rest her eye, or a familiar spot to which she could repair, but was fraught with torturing accusations.

My chief comfort after my dispiriting visits to this unhappy woman arose from the thankful eye with which the old butler conducted me across the cheerless hall. Poor Robson seemed grateful to any one that prevented his lady being left wholly to herself. So young, yet so unhappy!—So young, yet so hopeless! —What a destiny!—

Four days before the expiration of the long leave, I was dining at mess after sitting half the morning at Datchet, where, without explicit allusion on either side to Barty's approaching return, both of us were under the happy influence of the hopes which it created —I, because I had made up my mind to a full explanation with him on the subject of my pretensions to his sister's hand,—poor

because, though they were to meet no
know that he was near her was a
for such misery as hers;—when, lo!
my surprise, Lord James bade us
glasses to the health of "the new

t new ensign?" There was no vacancy
giment.
cousin, Sir Henry Axholm, will join
week," said he. "As senior ensign,
rse, get the lieutenancy."
what ensigncy—*what* lieutenancy
talking of?" was the general cry;
us being convinced that he was only
himself at our expense, by one of his
ifications.
kes will be gazetted out to-morrow,"
perceiving that, unless he conde-
to be more circumstantial, no one
lieve him. "As he corresponds, I
th one or two of you, I concluded
in the secret as well as myself."

Exclamations of wonder now became general. Some were only surprised,—some angry,—some hurt;—and more than one, well-pleased to get rid of a brother officer at little pains, of late, to cultivate a new growth of popularity.

"And so Barty is going out of the army?" inquired one of the older hands. "A deuced stupid thing of him, to throw himself out of his profession!—Barty would have made a smart officer in time."

"He takes a half-pay lieutenancy, I fancy, in some regiment of the line,—as an excuse for wearing a red coat at foreign courts," replied Lord James. "But I conclude he has done with soldiering as a profession."

"Then what is going to become of him?"

"Nay, you must ask Percy, there, who is more in his confidence than *I* am; though he sits looking as glum as though unaware, when Barty quitted us, that he never intended to join again."

was not with the regiment when
quitted you," said I, drily, for I
truth, bitterly mortified.
you were in constant correspondence
n, and are so now, I presume; for it
ng since I saw a letter addressed to
s handwriting. No matter!—*I* don't
for his secrets—I leave that to Holli-
l the rest of them. I have got his
ıcy, which is enough for *my* pur-

orthwith the conversation turned upon
ensign. "How old was he—how
w rich?—How long had he left Eton?
ıe fast, or slow?"
in, I beg to refer you to other peo-
olied Lord James: "I always leave
ions to be abused by my friends. If
t Harry Axholm's character, write
he Life Guards. Willscourt and Ar-
ıce were at Chaplin's with him, and
you more about him than I can, who

have never seen him since he was an urchin riding cockhorse on my grandfather's cane."

How glad I was to escape their noisy nonsense! Yet no sooner was I alone, than I longed to be back in the messroom, to get rid of my own thoughts. What *could* I say to her! How was she to bear this wholly unexpected blow! Within so short a time of her confinement, the shock might prove fatal.

All I hoped was, to keep it from her for a time. No newspaper ever reached the presence of Mrs. Stanley. She saw only a faithful old nurse, who had never quitted her since her marriage, and the gray-headed butler, both of whom would have cut their tongues out ere they made the slightest allusion to Mr. Brookes. There was consequently some chance that the delusive hopes which had so long comforted her soul, might still, though more than ever delusive, continue to support her.

w began to discover that, while de-
her, I had also been deceiving myself;
g myself that mere humanity induced
evote myself to this deserted sufferer,
I had found a selfish pleasure in her
. Mrs. Stanley was the only living
whom I could talk of Harriet,—talk
s she deserved to be talked of;—for
object of my affections bore the
Brookes sufficed to secure the sym-
the unhappy Ethel.

grees, she almost persuaded me that
please *her* I entered into such pro-
ils concerning Oak Hill; the nipped-
ıd romance of the quiet little maiden
d the pure and lady-like simplicity
ıworldly niece. Even the colour of
, even the tinge of her hair, possessed
for one to whom they recalled the
d hair of a person whom she was
see again, and whom she knew that
ed her to forget.

In this reciprocity of feeling consisted half our mutual good-will;—each being to the other a link to the real object of our affections. Mrs. Stanley's sudden removal from Datchet would have deprived me of my only confidante, if the name of confidante can be applied to a person to whom nothing was confided; and when the Gazette of the following evening confirmed Lord James's report, I trembled for *her* with deepfelt fears;—but a little, I admit, for myself.

Barty's prospects were sure to be pretty freely canvassed at mess. But it was no longer to me, it was to Lord James, that the youngsters addressed themselves for information.

"What the deuce is Master Barty going to do with himself?" said one of the junior ensigns. "He can't have stripped off his red coat to change it for a black one, as Tom Trevor did; for the Brookeses have no preferment to give away.—They are my own

people—and I know they have nei-
urch patronage nor borough interest.
nber the thing being canvassed at my
, when there was a talk of Sir Ro-
anding for the county."
he have no *pis aller* of that kind in
t, and the Juckesons don't come down
nely, the loving couple must starve!"—
he son of an opulent East India di-
who looked upon anything short of
nd venison as starvation.
d thurely I've heard that Brookth
y a mithewable five thouthand pounds
1 by hith father?" added little Harry
, better known in the regiment as the
ed Macauca.
at's *it!*" cried Lord James. "It is
e he has got only five thousand pounds
is wise enough to leave the regiment.
ousand pounds will never push him on.
d godfather, who gave him his com-
, did not leave him a guinea; and five

thousand pounds is only a genteel sort of beggary for a fellow with pretensions to live in the world; to which Barty, with *his* person and popularity, naturally aspires."

"But how is going out of the Guards to make him richer?" pleaded the city scion. "He could have lived as cheap with his regiment as anywhere else?"—

"Perhaps he wanted to realize.—Perhaps he has made up his mind to be a man, or a mouse. Old Broadham, his quondam guardian (with whom, by the way, he spent a week or ten days before he proceeded into Yorkshire), could easily give him a slice of a good thing now and then, by which his little capital might be doubled."

"Oh, Barty is going to speculate, eh!" cried the others, jumping at once at a conclusion. "I wish him joy! In that case, he may have to figure a second time in the Gazette.—I wish him joy—I wish him joy!"

"Perhaps you think that, as he always

oved the chink of the coin, he is going
old Broadham's cashier?" cried Lord
amused to find their interest so
excited. "No, no! I fancy Barty's
tions are on a grander scale. Depend
all these visits to my guardian, and
o my brother, and getting his little
within a ring-fence by selling out, are
ons of a consummation no less de-
o be wished, than a marriage settle-

the horrid Juckthonth!—Barty ith
be thpithed and thplithed!" ejaculated
arry Gilman.
now nothing about spiced or spliced!"
Lord James. "All I can tell you
Barty ordered his purchase-money to
ed up at old Broadham's Lombard
oncern; and that he was in a deuce
ry to get his traps booked off from
o ——— But enough, and more
ough," cried he, catching sight of my

face, and perceiving how intently I was listening. "Barty is no longer one of *us*; and we have no right to render his comings and goings as notorious as if advertised in the Hue and Cry."

"Whereth the good of hith making a mythewy about it?" whispered little Gilman, aside, to me. "Everybody knowth that old Broadham ith over head and earth in railroadth. I darethay he hath bamboothled poor Barty into hatharding hith little all in thome tottewing conthern."

All this was more than vexatious. Deeply mortified on my own account, deeply anxious on Barty's, I was grieved, even to consternation, by the prospects of Ethel.

"I am sure you bring me good news today!" said she, when, the following afternoon, I arrived at Datchet a trifle earlier than my wont; conscious that, in spite of my endeavours to look unmoved, a burning flush was patching my cheeks with shame. "'Beau-

e the feet of the bringers of good
'" continued she. "I was watching
from my chamber-window, and could
you crossed the courtyard, that your
s were those of a pre-occupied mind."
as thinking," said I, conscious of the
y of imparting strength to her en-
frame, "that the weather being so
le this morning, you might be induced
into the carriage, and extend your
s far as the park."
nvoluntary shudder pervaded her
t the proposal; — for, since poor
s death, she had never entered the
. It had, however, been left her, as
f humanity by the executors, in con-
n of her infirm health; for till the
a year, they were not forced to alter
ngements of the Datchet establish-

emed, however, to occur to her, on
thoughts, that I must have some

ulterior motive for a proposal so unusual. Perhaps *he* was come. Perhaps I had made such arrangements with my friend, that, in the course of the drive, she should be seen by him, unseen! The very thought brought to her wan cheeks a glow almost rivalling my own; and, ringing the bell abruptly, she desired the horses might be put to. Unprepared for such an order, difficulties of course arose.

But she overmastered them all. She resumed her voice of authority, her energy, her good sense. Within an hour, I had assisted her into the carriage, and bidden the coachman proceed to Bishopsgate.

But the time that had elapsed in preparation, had caused the beauty of that lovely spring day to evaporate before we reached the park. The sunshine was gone; the plantations had resumed their cold, leafless aspect; the birds had ceased to sing. And her dispirited and shuddering recognition of

l-known objects that met her eye,
me almost to regret the success of my
ion.

inately, a glimpse of a distant riding-
which contained several officers of the
and Life-guards, imparted a momen-
erest to the scene. One of them reined
orse for a moment, and tarried behind
, as if looking towards us; and as we
ckily, at too great a distance for her
eive that it was only little Harry
I saw by her change of colour that
cied the object of her drive was
lished.

e we parted, she proposed, of her
ord, that on the day after the mor-
e should drive again. Not on the
owing, for it was the sabbath; a day
h she never admitted me to her pre-
ut devoted it to unremitting devotion.
n occasion of this second drive, we
rtunate in one of those summer-like

days of spring, when you seem to see the grass rise and the leaves expand under the genial glow. The breath of Heaven was propitious!

"Your friend has brought sunshine with him," said the poor infatuated creature; and she spoke with a smile of such implicit confidence, that I felt ashamed of my well-intended duplicity.

I forgave myself, however, on perceiving how much her spirits were revived by the aspect of reviving nature. The orchards in bloom, the lilac bushes on the point of expanding into blossom, the cattle luxuriating in the green pastures, and the intensely blue sky bending over all, seemed to her humbled eye like gracious intimations from above that her fault might be forgiven;—that there were better days in store;—that there was joy in heaven over the sinner that repented.

Scarcely a day now passed but we either walked round the paddock opening from her

arden, or took a gentle airing in
r Park or forest. That we were seen
ral of my brother-officers, was inevi-
and that they found my *tête-à-tête*
e widow exceedingly diverting, was
se equally true. But though con-
that, through Lord James, my *dé-*
nt would reach the ears of Barty, I
ed; so satisfied was I of my own
in the compassionate act. Moreover,
e consolation of perceiving such won-
mprovement in the aspect and health
Stanley, that the sweetness of the
ay morning, with its breath of haw-
" tune of birds, and lapse of streams,"
ed almost as much effect on my own
, as upon hers. I was beginning to
that, after all, this world might be a
signed us to be happy.
ow not whether she were disappointed
rty did not show himself more openly;
ified that he should submit thus im-

plicitly to the determination she had expressed in the first trying moments of her widowhood, never to see his face again. Perhaps she expected, day after day, as she quitted the house, that chance would favour their meeting. For, day after day, she grew more anxious for her drive. Unwilling to go alone, from a sort of nervous dread of she knew not what, she was almost peevish when my turn of duty rendered it impossible for me to bear her company.

One afternoon—a cheerful, glowing afternoon, early in May, when, as I approached Datchet, the old crumbling garden-wall presented a mass of the variegated blossoms of the antirrhinum, with huge domes of lilacs intermingling, above, their exuberant bloom with the surfy balls of the gueldres rose, and milk-white blossoms of the double hawthorn; so that one could not wonder at the exulting tones of the nightingales pouring their summer-song on every side,—as I entered the

s, I saw old Robson standing on
stone door-steps, on which the gar-
d been placing that morning, by
stom, the hardier of the greenhouse
His poor old wrinkled, care-crazed
beaming with smiles; smiles of
nificance than regarded the mere
sness of the weather, or the resto-
f his favourite old myrtles and
s.

" His mistress was safe! She was
er of a boy.—God had been with
r pangs had been mercifully sus-
She was asleep.—The doctor had
ouse.—No one was in the nursery
Mary and the nurse. Would I like
child?"—

rsery!—a nursery at Lisbon House!
ad no curiosity to see the child. I
e sight of it might comfort *her*. It
comfort *me*. I dreaded to discern
nt features an accusing resemblance,

reminding me of its affinity to one I loved. Poor child of wrath!—Heaven send it might be come, like Paraclete the Comforter, to restore peace and health to its mother!—

CHAPTER XI.

ıtes ne sont pas toujours immédiatement punies. ous rendre le châtiment plus sensible, Dieu nous er dans quelque entreprise raisonnable, et nous ajustice des hommes.

CHATEAUBRIAND.

eve I have already admitted that my o Oak Hill abstained from all allusion intimacy with Mrs. Stanley. In the ıce, I felt a natural repugnance to even remotely, to a secret so unfit for icipation of a being chaste as Harriet; ırticularly as not a letter I ever ad- her but ran the risk of falling into ds of Mrs. Brookes; the very woman resented a confidence of such a nature, nore than my clandestine engagement iece. In the next place, it was im-

possible to allude to Datchet and its sorrows, without describing the conduct of Barty in terms I should not have forgiven myself for using to his sister.

I could not, however, on the great day, resist my inclination to address a letter to the sharer of all my joys and sorrows, (with whom, as is usually the case in such absences, my correspondence had of late insensibly slackened,) telling her how happy I felt, and that, some day or other, I would communicate to her the origin of my joy; but that at present she must content herself with congratulating me on the accomplishment of one of my earnest wishes, without inquiring why or wherefore.

The letter had not been long in the post, before I half repented my communicative vein.

"And when do you give us caudle, eh, Percy?"—inquired Lord James, the following day at mess.

pe you intend to invite us to the
g?" added the city ensign. "I have
nse practice in that way among my
ousins; and am quite qualified to
roxy, if the sponsors and their
oons should not be forthcoming."
ed fractiously, for on this sacred
could not stand being quizzed; and
ourse forced to pay the penalty of
nour. Nothing that could be de-
spared me in the way of allusion to
ry propensities. The birth of this
te babe was made the subject of such
ts, that I saw it was not Barty who
osed to feel a paternal interest in the

in vain I protested,—in vain I
—in vain I threatened. Lord James
ther equally mischievous person had
he pains of creating an impression
humane visits to Datchet were the
a warm and fortunate attachment.

"I have half a mind to write word to Barty Brookes, how well you look in his old clothes!" said his lordship in a tone of the most provoking sarcasm. "I have got a half-written letter to him in my desk; and will add to my congratulations on his marriage my congratulations on having so sad an incumbrance taken off his hands."

"His marriage?" — cried I, too much startled by *that* announcement to heed the offence conveyed in the other.

"By this time, poor fellow, I suppose he must be turned off. His family have behaved amazingly well to him. On finding old Juckeson disposed to double whatever Barty could lay down, the cubbish baronet forked out handsomely; and even a maiden aunt he has got, somewhere in the Eastern counties, produced a few scurvy thousands from the savings' bank. Between these gratuities, his commission, and patrimony, Barty contrived to scrape together a capital of sixteen thou-

unds. Upon which Cloves and Cinna-
ho, believing he had only five, had
l twice as much to his niece, was
o produce two-and-thirty. And so,
means or foul, Barty has become a
Capital.—And Barty will be a happy
Barty loves money like his own soul.
would have sold his own brother into
like Joseph's brethren, if he could
ured a long price for him."

some time past, the mystery with
was forced to envelop my intimacy
het, as regarded Harriet, had been
l grief to me. Concealment of any
twixt me and my plighted love was
table. I felt that every thought,
eling, every look, every word of mine
h she had not her share, was on *my*
rime.

, however, had this consciousness
l upon me so heavily as now that the
f poor Mrs. Stanley and the comfort

she took in her child inspired me with feelings that I longed to pour into the heart of Harriet. To withhold from her my anxiety and indignation, had been comparatively easy. But I could not forgive myself an unparticipated emotion of joy.

For as soon as Mrs. Stanley could sit up, I was admitted to her presence; that is, not *admitted*, but besought to pay her a visit;—that I might behold this treasure—this little one—this pearl of price, bestowed on one whom all the world had abandoned.

"Too much happiness — too much, too much for one like *me!*"—was her faint ejaculation, when first the babe was laid upon her aching bosom. "In my youth, when good and blameless, I had not a single relative to love me. My blood ran not in the veins of any living thing. If unhappy, there was no one to feel for me. If I had died, there was no one to mourn. And now—now that I have rendered myself an outcast—now that

o shrink from looking people in the
blessing is vouchsafed me, — this
sinless creature, that will love me
my faults!"

ouching words were repeated to me
lary, when first, with tears in her
gave me an account of her lady's
nd the beauty of her little nurs-
l I was consequently prepared, in
ner invitation the very day Mrs.
as moved into her dressing-room,
r in a state of enthusiastic exalta-
nd.

now June—balm-breathing, hope-
June. The fountain was again
the little garden, and the ever-
d lost their gloomy prominence,
d as they were by a wilderness of
tender green of the tulip-tree, and
f entangled woodbine and cle-
ound which the bees were murmur-
admiring joy. Even at the sick

chamber, the windows were open, to admit the warm and perfumed atmosphere from without; and when I entered it, had it been a sister of my own who lay extended on the sofa, which was so placed as to command a view of the garden, I could scarcely have felt more moved by the aspect of the sweet, pale face before me, or the slender delicacy of the hands extended towards me in grateful recognition.

She received me with tears—actually with tears; and besought my blessing for her child as though she thought it, more than other children, in need of the protection of Heaven. Poor soul! there was something painful in the way she lay looking at it, and the fervour with which she pressed her trembling lips to its little brow,—its tiny hand—nay, even to the hem of the garment. For after all, children are casual things. The strongest of them has a thousand perils threatening its feeble infancy. And one saw that if she *were* to

— but in *her* presence, I had not
even to imagine such a chance!—
ss which, in my turn, I bestowed
babe, was inspired, however, by
in which Mrs. Stanley had little
traced, or fancied I could trace in
eatures some vestige of the Brookes
nce—a something of Harriet, which
into the very depths of my heart.
el so ashamed *now*," faltered the
other, fancying she could perceive
ender embrace of her child that my
o towards her was unchanged, "I
hamed *now* of all I said to you a few
o of my disgust and weariness of
had not *then* heard the cry of this
ature!—I did not *then* know what it
have something belonging to one,—
g of one's own,—that one can clasp
heart, without fear of coldness, or
, or ingratitude!—Oh, I know better
n to say I am sick of life!"

The gentle bloom that tinged her cheek from the exertion of speaking,—the slight moisture that trembled in her violet-coloured eyes,—the fond, fond smile, that hovered upon her lips, endowed her countenance at that moment with almost superhuman beauty. I have seen just such faces, in pictures by the old masters, concentrating all the holiness and joy of mother-love into the face of an enraptured madonna, leaning over the babe of grace.

"*You* never deserted me in my misery, and God will bless you for it!"—said she, "for to comfort the unhappy is, indeed, a Christian act. But you must not desert me, either, in my present great joy; for I sometimes think my heart will break with the fulness of its love, and your company will inspire me with the serenity of which I stand so much in need. You will be godfather to my poor babe—will you not?—You will give it your name at the baptismal font?—That of

d would excite too many surmises,
comments; and it would be a
mockery to assign it that of my

since, under any circumstances, it
that of Stanley..."
legally! but by no act or deed of
d I my own will, it should be other-
will I be guilty of the deliberate
of giving it Mr. Stanley's Christian

e it Percy, then, with all my heart!"
"As your sincere and attached
ere will be nothing surprising in my
its sponsor."
rom the eagerness with which she
ne for what *she* called a concession,
was passing in her mind, that, had the
nces been different, as the bosom
Barty, I should naturally have be-
lfather to the first-born of his wedded

She seemed over-anxious that it should be baptized. "It was doubly in want of the waters of purification!"—And, ere I quitted her, it was settled between us that, on the last day of the month of her confinement, I should come, accompanied by the curate of Old Windsor (an intimate friend of mine), for the solemnization of the sacred rite.

"And the godmother?"

"The godmother is my faithful old Mary, if you will not be offended at finding yourself joined with her on the occasion!" replied Mrs. Stanley. "I have no other friend who might not take the application amiss. But had I a thousand at command, *which* of them would cleave to me in my misery as she has done, in warm and disinterested love to me and mine!"

Cheerfully did I accept my companion in office. But I could not help feeling how eagerly, had she been aware of the circumstances, my kind-hearted Harriet would have

l the sponsorship of the helpless little
on whom its fellow-creatures were so
o vent their scorn on the threshold

s left just then to enjoy my summer
pretty nearly as I listed. Lord
vas off, on leave, for a fortnight's en-
t of the London season; and the mess
l by his absence to wreak on his raw
Sir Henry Axholm, all the spites
by the sauciness of one, who might
ken out a patent for being impertinent.
ne time past, they had abandoned *me*
devices; for a person undisguisedly
rossed, ceases to be available to his
ions, even as a butt. My thoughts
o much distracted between Oak Hill
atchet, to admit of perceiving even
was laughed at.
my cares were divided was, strange
a relief. But for the critical state of
at Lisbon House, and my dread lest

the premature discovery of Barty's marriage should complete the mischief he had wrought, I should have experienced far greater uneasiness at a sort of constraint which I began to perceive, or fancied I could perceive, in the letters of Harriet.—She certainly did not write as she used.—Was I to infer from this, that she did not *feel* as she used?

I was beset by vague apprehensions that her brother's renewed intercourse with his family boded little good to my cause. Gold had eaten into his soul, till his ruling passion superseded even the claims of friendship. It would have been out of his present nature not to advocate the pretensions of Lord Donnington; and the munificent donation made him on occasion of his worldly-wise match, by his maiden aunt, who had always declared her fortune pledged to the niece to whom, from her birth, she had acted the part of a mother, inspired me with some misgivings that Mrs. Brookes would not have alienated

rriet what she had taught her to re-
ers, but for the conviction that she
ut to form a match too brilliant
of so small a portion being ac-

unt's convictions, however, would
nified little, had they not been se-
y the growing reserve of the niece.
er nervous people, I was *afraid* of
the exact state of the case! I dared
to Harriet, and say, frankly, "Tell
orst. If you repent your intentions
vour, let me learn it at once, and
rself." I preferred being deceived;
the confirmation of my fears would
veyed my sentence of death.
es, however, I grew desperate, and
d to know all;—whether I had for-
affection, and by whose cruel inter-
What letters I wrote her—what
her justice — what appeals to her
what outpourings of all that was in

my heart—those unimaginable mines of tenderness, deep hidden under a seemingly barren soil, but revealed by the divining rod of the adept! Whole nights did I devote to the expression of my feelings! But, when the morrow came, and daylight and reason dawned together on my impassioned vigils, every line I had written was impetuously destroyed; and I subsided into the restless, repining, but submissive lover, who knows his claims to be so slender, that he dare not afford a provocation which may bring them to judgment. A pitiful fear that Harriet only wanted a pretext to avow her change of mind, suspended my movements.

On the other hand, as the time drew near for my explanation with Mrs. Stanley, my heart sickened at the prospect. Though my personal liking for Brookes was almost wholly extinguished by his cold-hearted and barefaced baseness, still, he was Harriet's brother; and I recoiled from having to say,

man whom you so loved, this man who
ciously won your affections, has sacri-
ou to his interests in life."

ge, therefore, compassionate reader—
of my surprise and joy, when, after
ost careful preparation, I at length
ered out the terrible announcement of
rriage, instead of the frantic emotions
nticipated, instead of shrieks or swoons,
her gently raise her eyes to heaven;
having bowed her head for some
s in silence over the babe that was
pon her knees, heard her murmur the
ejaculation of—"*Now*, it is all my

d previously noted, that from the first
t that the all-potent instinct of mater-
e was roused in her heart, the influence
er feelings had been subsiding. Her
ss for her old nurse, her grateful re-
for myself, even the poignancy of
e connected with the memory of her

husband, gave way before that predominant influence of almost every female bosom. All her looks, all her feelings were concentred on her child. To that, at least, she might be all in all. From *that*, she had no inconstancy, no cruelty to apprehend. After all I had feared for her health, for her reason, for her peace, from the discovery of Barty's abandonment, I verily believe it was a relief to her to feel that an eternal barrier was placed between her and one who might have established a rivalship with her in that little heart; or, worse still, have endangered, at some future time, the filial love and deference of her son.

"Now I am happy!" cried I, when, before I took leave of her that day, I saw that her usual gentle gravity had experienced no interruption from our trying explanation. "Now I can look forward to little Percy's christening as a day of comfort. I can scarcely tell you, dear Mrs. Stanley, what a weight is removed from my mind!"

is a puzzling task to interpret the feel-
f others," was her rejoinder; "and
no right to expect you should augur
vourably of mine. Still, I think you
have guessed that the possession of a
e beyond my fondest hopes renders me
posed to grudge the happiness of
Let all be blessed in their own way.
s for nothing but riches, and he has
n. *I* care for nothing but the inter-
of an engrossing affection; and it is
for me *here*. *I* shall live for love,
for money!—We are both more for-
than we deserve."

he christening-day, therefore, I was
prised to find her composed to a sort
phic serenity, as she contemplated the
ce of the creature about to be placed
he protection of Divine Grace—the
e that was to be all in all to her,—the
at was to replace the loss of parents,
l, lover, friend!

Mary, with the superstition of her

calling, had laid aside her suit of sables, and prevailed upon Robson to do the same. Even the little cap and robe of the babe were adorned by the old woman with the white satin bows customary to such occasions; nor had her lady the heart to mortify the old creature by destroying her handiwork. Mr. Stanley had now been six months in the grave; and even the officiating clergyman would see nothing indecorous in the renouncement of mourning for an occasion replete with pious joy.

The very season and the scene seemed to second our attempts at cheerfulness. It was the full rose-tide of the year; and huge bouquets of those exquisite and heart-rejoicing flowers were placed by the servants in every corner of the grim old mansion, so as to grace it for a moment with a blush of beauty and youth. The fragrance of the atmosphere thus created operated on my feelings like a charm, as we crossed the threshold.

reverend friend, John Barnard, who,
being in my confidence, had gathered
from the reports of the neighbour-
be aware that circumstances of a
and painful nature attended the
ood of Mrs. Stanley, could not forbear
ulating me, as her friend, on the
ble change that had taken place in
earance, since, shortly before the birth
hild, he had administered to her the
rite of our faith. But as I was satis-
t he would not have overcome his
concerning the baptism of infants
rch, except from belief that the
was still incapable of quitting the
I made no answer when he pointed
exquisite bloom that mantled on her
hile instructing poor old Mary in her
f the day.

ily believe I was the most nervous of
y, during the few minutes occupied
baptismal vow !—Barnard was inspired

by the sentiments becoming his calling; poor Ethel by the inexpressible joy of presenting her child, her breathing child—her own, her only—to the lustration of grace. I alone remembered the sufferings of which it had been the cause under that roof, or the sin of which it was the seal. And I alone trembled, "rebuked by judgment to come."

So heartfelt, however, was the mother's hopeful joy, that, unwilling to dispirit her by the sight of my grave countenance, I hurried the departure of Barnard the moment the ceremony was complete, that our presence might form no obstacle to the indulgence of her intense emotions.

As we were quitting the house, I noticed, standing in the hall, a servant in livery, who looked as if waiting for an answer to a letter; a circumstance of such rare occurrence in that deserted house, that, but for Barnard being at my side, it might have excited my curiosity. As it was, my chief anxiety was

him away; and, though the mid-
sun was at its hottest, I walked him
alked him on towards his own house,
e had been in January instead of

g accompanied Barnard home, as I
osely prevented his sitting down to
ation prepared for us at Datchet,
ot decently decline his warm invita-
e to partake of a fruit luncheon that
iting him, and applaud some straw-
which, like every country curate's
wn strawberries, were "the finest in
d." It was consequently some time
got back to the barracks:—where the
g I saw was old Robson awaiting my

ust come back to Datchet immedi-
f I had the least regard for his
y, I must hasten back to Lisbon
Something terrible had occurred,—
ely seemed to know what. Mrs.

Stanley had been in a succession of fainting fits; between which, the only intelligible word she had been heard to utter, was my name.

"A letter *was* brought, then, by that fellow in the green livery! I thought so?" cried I. And though sorely disinclined to venture out again in the heat of the day, I could not refuse to step into the carriage and accompany him back.

Re-admitted to the presence of Mrs. Stanley, I could scarcely persuade myself that it was the same person I had quitted two hours before.—An age seemed to have passed over her head. An utter transformation seemed to have changed her very nature.

She was indeed, as old Robson had described her, almost inarticulate. One might have believed she had undergone a paralytic seizure.

"Read *that*!" muttered she,—perceiving that her attempts at explanation left me

nfused and amazed than before. And
g a letter from her pillow, she placed
y hand.—" Read it,—and tell me
I am not sufficiently punished *now* !"
, as she desired me,—though not so
lly as I could wish:—for between
ntence I could overhear her indistinct
gs of "' Vengeance is mine. I will
aith the Lord!' His vengeance *hath*
me. His vengeance hath indeed
me!—But my punishment is greater
an bear!"—

CHAPTER XII.

Preach some philosophy to make me mad,
And in return, thou shalt be canoniz'd.
For being *not* mad, but sensible of grief,
My reasonable part produces reason
How I may be deliver'd of these woes,
And teaches me to kill or hang myself;
If I were mad, I should forget my woes.

SHAKSPEARE.

If any thing *could* justify implacability in a Christian nature, it is well-grounded jealousy. —Though not by nature cruel, I will not answer to what acts of vengeance I might have been prompted, by infidelity in a wife. But no other motive could justify the infliction of such tortures as I saw endured by poor Ethel, that day, when apprized that neither *my* interference nor that of any other person could save her from the blow announced in the fatal letter!—

Stanley's death-bed curse upon her
teful injury" had been "not loud,
ep!" The measure of his vengeance
the more deadly, for having appeared
e.

dicil to his last will decreed that the
hich, by virtue of his marriage settle-
was to succeed to the whole of his
y, should be placed under the care of
cutors,—who were requested to act as
dians,—on attaining the age of one
—"I have no objection," added the
" to its being seen by its mother, at
imes and places; but always under
riction and in presence of one of its
ns."

ese guardians, one was his banker and
Mr. Broadham of Lombard Street;
ner, a disappointed brother-in-law,
hildren, had his own marriage been
ul, would have succeeded to his estate.
of them was likely to be over-indul-

gent towards the mother thus bitterly punished; and they had some pretence for administering, with "the utmost rigour of the law," the will of the injured testator.

Old Broadham, however, having had enough of guardianships, it was the brother-in-law, a retired proctor, whose heart was of the consistency of a cuttle-fish, who undertook the charge of the infant; and fancied he was making a kindly concession to the widow, by despatching his footman with the admonitory letter announcing the deprivation of her child, instead of claiming it through one of the clerks of his office.

It was this letter which had to be answered when I arrived at Datchet. But what availed reply?—The power was with *them*,—nay, the necessity of enforcing it was with *them*;—for Stanley had made a handsome legacy to his brother-in-law contingent upon his rigid discharge of his duty.

I wrote, however, in her name, because she

it,—wrote because she had sent a
nessage, by the servant, promising to
-wrote because she had faith (woman-
the power of a letter. And all the
was writing, she kept weeping at my
nd now and then, started forward and
o my arm, retarding me in the dis-
of my office, to enforce some yet more
argument—some still tenderer plea
the rest. Her whole heart was in
rds of her suggesting; and they
ke Abel's offering on his altar,—fruit
vers.—But, alas! not, as upon them,
e acceptance of Heaven destined to
l upon her prayer!—
d her so. I warned her that she was
ting herself for nothing,—that these
l not even the option to befriend her,—
v, as well as conscience, sanctified due
ge of the last wills of those departed.
still, she wept and prayed so bitterly,
there was such hope,—such trust

within her heart,—she was so convinced that no one could refuse a *mother*,—a mother was a character suddenly invested with such thrice holy consequence in her young heart,—that to refuse her was impossible. And the letter was sealed and sent; and poor Ethel fondly flattered herself that her cause was safe.

I never shall forget the smile with which she went and fetched the babe from the cradle, to indulge me with a sight of it, as the best reward that could be offered to my exertions. But old Mary, who knew all, and had witnessed her frantic excitement during the indictment of the letter, whispered to me, when Mrs. Stanley retired with it from the room to discharge her maternal duties, that, as it was, the results of such agitation might prove fatal to her nursling.

"And if anything should happen to the poor infant," said she, "God help its mother!"—

She also hinted, from her knowledge of the character of the brother-in-law of her late

that mercy was as much to be ex-
f the nether millstone; and on my
g to quit the house for the second
r entreaties were still more earnest
se of Mrs. Stanley, that I would return
iet at an early hour on the morrow,
her poor mistress with my advice.
I had not complied with her request.
vas a case in which all counsel was
ng; and, but for my compliance, I
red myself the sight of tears, and
prayer and anguish that will haunt
ory for ever.
swer to her letter, the guardian ap-
in person, with proper attendants, to
the child; judging, and perhaps
hat delays were dangerous.
neither he nor I had reckoned, nor
ny *man* though "of woman born,"
on the force of superhuman energy,
by a mother's love, or the force it
gn to the arm, the voice, the step,

the inspired and frantic eloquence of even the most delicate woman. All that she said, all that she did, all that she promised, might have moved a heart of stone. — It did not touch that of the lawyer.

She told the story of the infant. She proclaimed, to her misery, how much it was hers —to her shame, that it was not her husband's: and offered, with a sense of renunciation very different from that which had actuated *my* vows in its name the preceding day, to renounce, in its behalf, the pomps and vanities of the world,—to resign all claim to the rich inheritance of Mr. Stanley, and retire with it to some obscure corner, and work for its maintenance, reserving her maiden name and never to be heard of again by family or friends.

But the man of the law knew better than to regard this as feasible. He knew better than to accept the unchecked overflowings of her generous soul. There was but one path

to pursue, that of his duty; and
requested me, in the belief that I was
anley's nearest friend, to remain with
take charge of life and limb at such
nt of desperation, he profited by the
insensibility into which she had fallen
ng his final negative, to place the
nd child in his carriage, and hurry
e place. He had already promised
rite tidings of its safety to its un-
nother; and so to place it, that, as
her first despairing frenzy was to be
she might be admitted to frequent
ys. But for the present, he said, it
e best to leave her no address; that,
time, all communication might be
off.

all this can be brought about,"
ne, evidently fancying that he was
a great concession in consideration of
r widow's affliction, "till all this
rought about, she is at liberty to re-

main at Datchet. Till the close of the year, the house will not be offered for sale."

I felt almost relieved on hearing the sound of his departing wheels. But the sensation lasted only till Ethel's restoration to consciousness convinced her that all hope was gone,—that the light of her eyes was departed—and then I could have found it in my heart to crawl on my knees in the dust after this man, and pray him to have mercy. I really thought she was dying. I fully expected every moment would prove her last. The convulsions of her overtasked frame were as those of a person labouring under an attack of epilepsy.

The two aged servants of her household entreated me, with tears, not to desert her; or, rather, not to desert *them* in this exigency. There was no one to afford them a single word of advice; and how much, alas, was needed! I remained accordingly — remained the whole of the day,—a day ending

ferently from its joyous commence-
All the preparations were yet appa-
he roses were still disposed through-
ıouse; and, methought their slightly
fragrance evinced only a too grievous
th the event they purported to adorn.
not till very late at night I left
Ten to one, mischief would be made
uture time, of so prolonged a visit.
red not. On *her*, scandal must here-
as on a stone; and as to me, the
on entitled to take umbrage at my
vas of too generous a nature not to
instead of resenting, my devotedness
who moved my pity all the more
by reminding me of the helplessness
et.

day, matters were worse. Agitation,
l with this sudden weaning of the
d her carelessness of all precaution,
wn Mrs. Stanley into a violent fever.
ight she was delirious. It was too

late now for her to be solaced by the return of the little creature her soul so yearned for, which, all day, had been the object of her incoherent prayers. She would no longer have recognized its face. The proof was, that in her paroxysms, she kept mistaking me for Barty; and throughout the night, in presence not only of poor Mary and the nurse but of her medical attendant, addressing me the most heart-rending reproaches.

Sometimes, she fancied that the shade of Mr. Stanley approached her bedside; and oh, how touching were her invocations to him for pity and pardon! She pleaded her wasted youth, like a blighted spring, bringing forth only fruits of bitterness, in extenuation of her frailty. She appealed to him as a father—as him who had replaced *her* father,—to remember how she had been snatched from the obscure monotony of a school-room, and flung uncounselled into the world;—how a mother's care, and female guidance had been wanting

en, she told him how she had suf-
how she had repented,—how she had
rned and betrayed; and implored, in
ration of all this, that he would give
her child—her little one—her only
child that was hers alone!
eaven's mercy, long hours of stupor
d to all this distraction. But she
the less in danger. Poor old Mary's
vas too deep for tears, and even the
n shook his head.
llowing day, I was on duty; and a
it was, though I managed twice to
, by message, that poor Mrs. Stanley
vorse. But she was no better. How
be better, while body and soul were
lved in one common struggle?
infinite regret, Lord James's leave
and he returned that very day to his
For his wanton levity, that cared
it aimed at or whom it wounded,
ly tormenting at such a moment. I

really believe he liked me in his heart, and that his early visit to me, on duty, was for the pleasure of seeing me again. But it seemed to me *then* as if he sought me only for the purpose of affording disagreeable intelligence concerning Barty Brookes.

"I wish to Heaven, my dear Percy," said he, "that you could see him perching like a peacock on his new roost! He and the fair Sabina have obtained the absolute control of old Juckeson's establishment; and they are giving the best dinners in London—outshining Larch Lodge by a whole buffet of gold plate and half a dozen footmen in appropriate mace-coloured liveries. By clever management, Barty has managed to get up an amazing show of hands in their favour;—old Yorkshire connexions of his family—Eton chums—the Suffolk friends of his sister and aunt,—and among them my fair cousin Lady Georgiana Trench, who has taken half of Mrs. Brookes's opera-box."

's wife with an opera-box!—
l is he the happier for all this osten-
was my cold inquiry.
dear fellow, I hardly set my eyes
n. His better half was all I saw;—
orgeous, that, like Peau d'Ane in her
-gown, she all but blinded me. Barty
seen west of Temple Bar. Barty
me a city man.—Barty is director
en railroads, and thinks of nothing
ey-spinning. The disease engendered
lived with his old banker-guardian,
ng out with the utmost virulence.
w can talk of nothing but capital.
s to think he has accomplished the
pose worth living for, by picking and
and scraping together what may be
ortune."
Lady Georgiana?"—said I, anxious
hearing any more at that moment
rty.
y Georgiana?—Hillo!—What! are

you going to follow Brookes's example, and sell yourself for a mess of pottage at last?"—

"If I were, I should hardly need to ask you for news of her!" said I. "I was about to inquire, with quite as much interest, after the health of the Mandevales."

"Thank you!—They are as well as can be expected, considering that his lordship has been undergoing the water-cure, to relieve him from the state of perfect health under which, for many years past, he has laboured; and that his wife, like other country-ladies who come up gaping after novelty in the London season, has swallowed the whole science of magnetism at a mouthful. I left her mesmerizing her maid, to ascertain whether her mantuamaker would send home a new satin gown in time for the opera. And now, as you have been so good as to listen to all this without a single yawn, I will answer your query about the widow. Between ourselves, I suspect her hour is come; and *this* time, she

osen well; for Donnington has no wits
, like poor Adolphus Trench, and will
s crown of martyrdom as a mere sim-
to the last."

ou do not mean that she is going to
Lord Donnington?"

e means it, I fancy; for they are never
I don't know about *him*. But I never
man but yourself persist in cruelty to
y widow with a pretty jointure, who
s to have him whether he will or no.
ave set up a sort of firm of Donning-
ookes and Trench, which increases the
ience of all its partners. You have
on what fine folks Mr. and Mrs. Barty
coming, under such illustrious patro-
I never address them except hat in
or it is as much as my place is worth
give them the wall!"

this would have been matter of re-
or matter of indifference to me, but
silence of Harriet. To my last two

letters, I had received no answer; and was too proud to write a third, petitioning for kinder entreatment. My offices were just then so painfully in request at Datchet, that I had the less leisure to make myself uneasy. Yet uneasy I was. Even if Lord James's statement of Lord Donnington's change of purpose were correct—even if I had nothing to fear from the evil dealing of others; there is always—*always*—so much to be apprehended from the natural inconstancy of the sex. Women grow weary of waiting. Women find it so difficult to concentrate, in any of the relations or pursuits of life, their attention on a single object. Women are so apt to change, for very wantonness, when every thing on earth conspires to insure their fidelity.—

And, alas! in *my* case, instead of being favoured by conspiring circumstances, everything and everybody was in league to justify the instability of her love. However, as I

ore, I had a primary duty to per-
at forbade all weak indulgence in the
ss of desponding love.—I trusted to
nce.—I trusted to Providence even as
r, broken reed at Datchet trusted to
—

CHAPTER XIII.

Du trépas, dans mes yeux, vois la terne lueur,
Donne, oh! donne moi tu main — dis mon nom — fais entendre
Quelque mot consolant, s'il ne peut-être tendre!
Des jours qui m'étaient dus, je n'ai que la moitié.
Laisse en aller mon âme en rêvant la pitié!—

ALFRED DE VIGNY.

I had been warned by the physician in attendance at Lisbon House—a good and humane man, as well as a skilful—that, in the event of his succeeding in reducing the high fever by which Mrs. Stanley's mind was now excited, much of her future safety would depend on the nature of the first impressions she received on the dawning of her reason.

When he told me so, I scarcely listened; for, never before having seen a person affected by delirium, it seemed as impossible to me

the fever *should* subside, as for the dead
ise and walk! I could conceive nothing
he icy hand of death capable of tran-
zing those frightful paroxysms. But
on the fourth day after her seizure, old
n stood awaiting me in the hall, with
s that an express had arrived from
n, from the brother-in-law of Mr.
y, who was the passive instrument of
sthumous revenge, entreating that his
ss would hasten to Wimpole Street, for
e infant's life was despaired of, I saw
great as was the existing evil, worse
betide.

"hat answer had been given?" was, of
, my first inquiry. Nor could I much
r at the indiscreet zeal evinced by the
ed old servant, in having despatched
ord to the guardians that their relent-
l come too late; that, thanks to their
, his mistress also was on the verge of
ave; that those who had killed the

child had killed the mother; that she was not even in a state of mind to comprehend the new calamity awaiting her.

"And Mrs. Stanley herself?" I next inquired.

"Better — decidedly better. Her night, sir, was far from tranquil; but towards morning, Mary says, she fell into a sweet sleep, as suddenly as the wind sometimes lulls after a storm. When the doctor came this morning, as usual, the first thing in his round of visits, she was still sleeping so composedly, that he would not have her disturbed. He looked in upon her, and said, 'Sleep was God Almighty's medicine, which was always the best;' and promised to call again in the afternoon. And will you believe it, sir?—the strangest thing—(only that poor Mary's word is as Gospel truth, I wouldn't believe it myself) — all my poor mistress's ravings this blessed night were of her little boy, whom she had never named before since the fatal

ng day; seeing him in her delusions
eeing him dying — and striving and
g to get at him, to take him into her
d nurse him once again."

f a half-believer in magnetic influ-
felt less surprised at this clair-
than the old butler.

just on the turn of morning, sir, as
d the nurse the doctors have sent in,
ving to hold her down, hoping that,
er fatigue, she would fall asleep at
suddenly clasped her hands together,
ave often noticed her do before, sir,
tered something like, 'Tis over—
ll be done!'—and then sank into the
eep from which she has not yet
'

careful to insist that, when she *did*
f the prediction of the good doctor,
mind would probably be restored to
tive composure were verified, no inti-
hould be given of the express from

London, so as to hazard the re-disturbance of her faculties. To what purpose? She was as little capable of obeying the summons to visit her dying child, as of attempting a journey to Rome!—It would have been a mere infliction of useless pain.

That day, on my return from what Lord James facetiously called one of my dry-nursing expeditions to Datchet (he called them so but once, however, for the stern expression of my determination not to be made the object of his coarse raillery silenced him in a moment), I found, lying on my table, a packet, addressed in Barty Brookes's handwriting, which had arrived by the London coach.

Convinced that anything despatched to me by the new Dives boded me no good, I felt an inexpressible repugnance to open it. It seemed as if everything issuing from his money-made and money-making house, must smell of pounds, shillings, and pence!

the present instance I was mistaken. packet in question savoured only of ery! — It contained every gift I had bestowed upon his sister: a locket, a locket of crystal, containing my hair; guet watch, by which I had happened l her the hour, in answer to the first on she ever addressed me, and which, years afterwards, at parting, she ac- l from me as a relic; and an old- ned sapphire ring, that had been once other's, exchanged for one of her own, emn trothplight.

letters, too—not one of them wanting— l, and addressed to me in her own well- n handwriting! — No mistaking, there- that this cold-hearted and cruel insult n act and deed of her own!—

t because it *was* so cruel and so cold- d, it affected me less than might have expected from my previous sensitive- o every cloud that had passed over the

sunshine of my love. I felt only indignant—enraged and indignant. Placing out of sight my claims upon the woman who had pledged herself to be my wife, attributing to petulance, arising from some unexplained mistake, the ungraciousness of *her* conduct—(for even in anger I adhered to my conviction, that *she* could do no wrong)—a long series of services to Barty, a long series of *affectionate* services, rendered it almost infamous that, the moment he found himself established in the world as one of the worshipful community of Mammon, he should turn upon me, and use me like a beggar!—

It was late in the day. Choking with rage, I was forced to sit down to dinner, lest, peradventure, Lord James might have been in my room during my absence, and noticed the parcel addressed by Brookes. And very difficult did I find it to avoid getting into half a dozen quarrels in the course of dinner; so boiling was my blood, and so clearly did

undiced eye discern purpose of offence
n the simplest words addressed me.
d James had ridden over to Chertsey;
naving passed the Juckesons' house on
turn, announced that he had made in-
s at the lodge, and that the family were
xpected down during the summer or
nn. The furniture, in fact, had been
sent to town.
Brookes has evidently determined those
superannuated idiots to settle in some
of their country seats!" said he. "I
se he was afraid of having too many
by hangers-on, among his old friends
bouts."
d though this sortie could not possibly
to his brother officers (the battalion
already under orders for Winches-
I could not help fancying that his eye
l upon *me*, as he pronounced the word
ubby."
last my ordeal was over; and, disen-

tangling myself with some difficulty from my companions, I rushed up into my room, and bolted myself in, to ponder upon my injuries. Having thrown myself on my sofa, I trusted to enjoy an hour's peaceful deliberation upon the steps I had yet to take.

Alas! ere half that time had expired, a loud tap at the door arrested the course of my bitter reflections. Concluding it was one of my brother officers, I resolved not to answer. Again, after a pause, the knock was repeated; and still, I remained sullen and silent. At length a third tap was followed by the voice of the soldier who had formerly officiated as Brookes's servant, and was now mine, addressing me loudly by name.

"A letter, sir!—a letter requiring an immediate answer..."

"From London?" said I, as I instantly half-opened the door, fancying that nothing worthy of my interest could reach me from any other quarter.

, sir—from Datchet!"

om Datchet!" I exclaimed, feeling, I in the peevishness of the moment, Datchet I had had something too

when the light was struck, and I saw letter addressed in a strange writing, was placed in my hand, contained a rcely intelligible and incoherent lines, by the hand of poor Ethel herself— ctually by the hand of poor Ethel — I ned myself for my selfish petulance.

ne to me, kindest and best of friends," she, "that I may see you once more die."

I forbear? — could I hesitate? only to place in safety those now objects and letters, which, when I them to lock them into my desk, hough I held some loathsome reptile and, so that all the blood in my body to flow back to my heart, I got into the

carriage that was waiting; and, through the quiet sweetness of the summer night, hastened back to a spot which a sad presentiment forewarned me, even more than the letter I had received, I was about to visit for the last time.

What a whirlwind was in my mind! In spite of the composure I was forced to assume, to visit the house of mourning—the presence, perhaps, of death,—every pulse in my veins was throbbing with one of those tumults of body and soul, which it is fortunately given us to sustain but once or twice in our lives.

Before I ventured to fulfil the purpose for which I was called, of entering the presence of Ethel, I had another short conference with Robson. It was necessary I should ascertain what changes had occurred.

"The worst, the very worst!—Intelligence had arrived of the death of the infant,—and his poor mistress knew all!"—

I shook my head with a heavy sigh; not

greeing with *him* that *this* was the
hat could happen, but from dread of
erview I was about to encounter.
, sir; she is quite calm, quite com-
quite herself *now!*" replied the old
, in reply to the expression of my
"But the doctor says we must not think
ter of her state for *that.* He spoke
gravely, just now, about sending for
ends, than I ever heard him yet! It
seems such mockery, sir, when they
my poor mistress's friends."
mockery indeed,—poor, helpless, de-
t from infancy on the mercies of the
It was not, however, a moment to
e myself by too much pity.
ing caused my arrival to be announced,
d in uneasy wretchedness till old Mary
o conduct me into the sick room. A
vas already placed for me by the bed-

ing more light," said the sufferer, in a

voice so changed, that I should never have guessed it to be that of Mrs. Stanley, "bring more light, Mary; I want to see his kind looks once again. I have been wandering so long in darkness! I have seen such threatening faces! Thanks!—" said she, when they placed the lamp on a table near enough to enable us to distinguish each other; and, extending her thin hand towards me, upon which I bowed my face, to conceal the tears which in spite of all my resolution, fell profusely. "Friend!" continued she—"*friend!*" (as if repeating the word to herself, for her own pleasure, rather than addressing *me*) "what a name of comfort!—I wanted to breathe it once again before I died."

Old Mary, who was standing beside us weeping also, begged me not to let her mistress what she called "take on so." But knowing that in that "taking on" lay all her solace, I offered no opposition.

"You have been so good to me!" said

moment afterwards, when her strength
d her again to speak; "so good, so
rly, so different from all the rest!
heart is as the heart of one who has
mother he respected, and sisters whom
ed. *You* can think of other things
s money; and from you, therefore, I
ope for support in the discharge of my
ıties."

verything, my dear Mrs. Stanley —
hing and anything in which I can serve
you may command!" said I, lest she
l weary herself by pleading.

want you to be my executor," said she,
still hoarser voice, though faintly en-
uring to smile. "I am going to make
ill. You will wonder why I want to
my will; I who have nothing, now
he poor fatherless babe they took from
safe — safe and happy with its Father
s in heaven. But the poorest has al-
some trifle, some tatter, some humble

belonging to bestow; and there are those whose claims upon me are more by love than law. Will you, dear friend—will you undertake this last troublesome office for one who can reward you only by her prayers?"

Need I say how unconditional, how eager was my assent?

"But there is still time to think of this," said I, pressing within my own the poor, feverish hand she made no effort to withdraw. "All you must think of now is the restoration of your strength. All you must think of is rest."

"Yes—*rest!*—But not the rest of this world. *Here* I must yet labour—here I must yet strive.—Only for a season.—My days are done.—My very hours are numbered.—Already, the peace that passeth all understanding is dawning for me.—I see what you cannot see, Percy; I hear what you cannot hear."

Having been previously apprized by Robson

mental delusion entertained by Mrs.
y, that the spirit of her child was pre-
ith her—that it was come to summon
m this world—I was the less surprised
he calmly added—"My babe watches
ne now, as once I watched over *him;*
know that my prayers are heard, and
y appointed hour is come."

you could only prevail on my mistress,
ercy, to take something to support her-
nd try to sleep, instead of wearing
out by talking, it would be such a
g!" whispered her poor old heart-
attendant.

o not be angry, do not scold me, dear
" said she, drawing the old creature,
d advanced towards the curtain, nearer
by the sleeve, and resting her head
er arm, as she had been accustomed to
er childhood. "This is the last day's
e you will ever have with me, Mary;
t—the last!"—

The old woman stooped down and kissed her forehead. The dying woman seemed to have become her child again. The youth of eternity was on her brow. She was entering into a new stage of existence.

"I will do what you bid me now," added Mrs. Stanley, as if to reward the fond tears of genuine love that were fast falling on her cheeks. "I will rest.—It is late—It is midnight.—But you must not let my friend Mr. Percy leave the house. You must show him the room I ordered prepared for him; for to-morrow the lawyer is to be here. It was too late—he would not come from Windsor to-night. But to-morrow, at daybreak, he will accompany your friend Mr. Barnard, who is to visit me for the last time; and you will all join with me — will you not?— in accomplishing my last duties of this world."

Blinded by my tears, I followed the old nurse in silence to my destination;—con-

that the apprehensions of the dying
ı were just, and that if she exerted
f for further conversation, strength
not be vouchsafed her for the discharge
e duties after which her parting soul
l.

ving been informed by Robson, who was
g for me in my room, that the clergy-
nd lawyer had promised to be in atten-
at eight o'clock, I dismissed him, on
ce of wishing to sleep, to be prepared
ch early rising.

ep, however, under such circumstances,
ould I!—And I had neither book nor
g materials to beguile the intervening
Only my own sad thoughts! Only
wildering fancies of one who was be-
g to doubt whether any thing real, or
or good, or holy, existed in this self-
g world!—

ler the consciousness of my own wrongs,
the dying Ethel's,—I writhed again!—

And then recurred to my memory, as by a sort of fantasmagoric vision, the words I had perused that morning in a London paper—"On Saturday last Mr. and Mrs. Brookes entertained a select dinner party at their splended mansion in Portland Place. Among the company were—" But why recapitulate the accursed list of Dukes and Lords, to live among whom with appropriate brilliancy of equipage, and a befitting number of rogues in livery, Barty had sold his soul, and sacrificed the peace and well-being of others besides himself!—

I could not bear the glare of the candles—a mere mockery of my want of occupation. Having extinguished them, and drawn aside the curtains, to admit the soft moonlight, so much more soothing to my aching senses, I found that my chamber occupied the side of the old house overshadowed by the fine old cedar-tree, formerly described. A gentle summer breeze was agitating its branches;

s they rose and fell, a dark shadow, as of
eal plumes, was traced by the moonlight
e white walls of my chamber. Was it an
?—The supernatural vision described by
ole in his Otranto occurred at that mo-
to my mind. Alas! what invention of
ost poetical human imagination, but has
rototype in the eternal treasury of
e!

length, weary and exhausted, I threw
f upon the bed in my clothes, lest the
of my pacing footsteps should disturb
oor sufferer whose room was at no great
ce; and having watched those dispirit-
adows upon the wall, till their gentle
ations affected my over-wearied senses,
ually fell asleep,—a distracted and rest-
eep,—but enough to render me uncon-
of surrounding objects.

en I woke, Robson was by my side,
e sun shining full into my chamber.
he gentlemen were already come. Mrs.

Stanley was tolerably composed. They had both been with her these ten minutes."

In ten more, I had joined them.—But I was not sorry to see that her medical attendant had also made his appearance; so that, if the exertions she meditated were too much for her, he was at hand to oppose his veto.

"I have profited by your absence, my dearest friend, to execute a portion of the duty that lies heavy on my hands," said she, as I approached the bedside,—"My last will has been written from my dictation, and awaits only my signature."

The saddened faces of those surrounding the bed apprized me that, in spite of the firm voice in which she spoke, these preparations were not premature, and that all hope was over.

"What I have now to ask of all present, and especially, doctor, of *you*," continued she, with impressive steadiness,—"is whether they consider my mind in a sufficiently clear and collected state to execute a valid will?"

erfectly so,"—was the unhesitating reply
ose to whom she appealed. "And I am
red to attest it on oath," was the further
rmation of her medical attendant.

moment afterwards, she affixed her
to the deed placed before her by the
tor; and though her tremulous hand had
ely power to perform the office, the
ness of her purpose was perceptible to
The man of the law and my friend
ard, as well as her physician, next added
signatures, as witnesses. *My* assistance
eclined, as being interested in the will;
, when duly executed, was placed in her
r's custody; and he and the doctor imme-
y withdrew together. Aware, however,
his patient was about to receive the last
lations of her faith, the latter whispered
as he passed, that he would not immedi-
quit the house. From indications I
ess able to interpret than himself, he
hat her end was near.

the dread solemnities that followed, let

me not presume to touch. Suffice it that she requested my permission for the two old servants to share with us the sacred rite, in which I had already proposed to participate. Previous to the administration, in a broken voice and with the unnatural light of death gleaming in her eyes and streaming in feverish patches on her cheek, Mrs. Stanley made a full confession of her fault;—an act of atonement, — a public pardon-seeking, — that, through humbleness and contrition, her soul might find grace in the sight of her Eternal Judge.

After such a confession, I could not help thinking it an unnecessary show of rigour on the part of my friend Barnard, to demand of her whether she had forgiven her enemies, —whether she cherished no resentment,— even against him to whose cruel desertion she had slightly alluded,—whether she quitted this world in peace with all mankind?—But I soon rejoiced at his severity. For the look

ice of angelic meekness—with which
lied in the affirmative—" that she for-
s she hoped to be forgiven," will never,
be effaced from my memory!—Poor
shadowy thing!—And yet crowned at
oment with the ecstatic glory of a

r the last words of the sacred cere-
that followed, she seemed indisposed
ak again. Signing to us that she
to sleep, she lay down her head upon
low,—and never raised it again!—
ing withdrawn at her bidding, as soon
nard had taken his departure I joined
octor, who was sitting on a bench
the cedar-tree, awaiting a summons;
hilst we were still talking of her,—
eauty,—her gentleness,—her edifying
nce and grace,—the window of her room
stily thrown open by old Mary, calling
to hasten up.—" Her mistress was
"

Alas! she was not dying,—she was *dead!* —The sleep which she had felt stealing upon her so gradually, was the sleep of death!—

Thank God, it was given to me to look upon her in those first moments of her release! But for *that*, I should never have known to what glory human beauty might attain. Oh! my poor Ethel! Oh, my ill-fated friend! who could gaze upon the heavenly smile that irradiated thy poor wasted face, without thanking Him by whom thy prolonged trials were ordained, that thou hadst at length entered into thy rest!—

Knowing myself to be the delegate of her last will, I was forced to hasten off after the lawyer, who had by this time reached Windsor with it in his possession, that the seal so lately affixed might be broken in his presence. It was necessary to ascertain, without loss of time, her pleasure concerning the disposal of her remains. As I suspected, they were not to lie at Datchet. "I dare not," was the

of the will, " propose that my grave
be made near the vault of the family I
disgraced. Let me be buried in the
yard of Old Windsor. Other unfortu-
besides myself, have been admitted
,

. Stanley probably alluded to the
of Perdita.

other injunctions of the will were
ed in the same lowly spirit. A few
jewels of some value, bequeathed to
an aunt, were to be sold, and the sum
eed expended on a life-annuity for poor
ary. Robson, who had been liberally
ed for by his late master, was requested
ept her watch and desk as a token of
ul regard. The rest of her property, of
ver kind or sort, was bequeathed to
Out of it, I was to defray her funeral
ses, and become her residuary legatee.
erms of the bequest were those of the
t affection. She described me as the

friend who had been true to her in adversity as in prosperity,—in sickness as in health,—brother in all but name.

Yes! I had been indeed her brother; and she, the gentlest and best of sisters. When I accompanied old Mary and the nurse into her chamber after she had been placed in her coffin, to look for the last time upon her solemn clay-cold face—my tears fell more for myself than *her*.—The lid was about to close upon the only living being to whom my welfare was more than a matter of indifference.

CHAPTER XIV.

Is she dead?
Why so shall I be, ere these Autumn blasts
Have blown on the beard of winter.

PROCTOR.

ad torn myself from my sad devotions
side, and was entering into the neces-
articulars with Robson concerning the
tions to be observed to render the
l (which was to take place on the
w) as private as possible, when a scared-
g housemaid ushered into the cedar
r where we were standing a stranger,
outward man wore the unmistakeable
teristics of the lawyer's clerk.
Ir. Robson, I presume?" said he, ad-

dressing my companion, without removing his hat in deference to either the gray hair of my companion, or my air of astonishment. "In that case, I am instructed by the executors of Mr. Stanley to apply to you for information concerning the next of kin of his late wife, whose decease we see announced in the newspapers."

"My poor lady had no next of kin," replied the old servant.

"Every body, if born in wedlock, my dear sir, must have a next of kin of some kind or other," replied the clerk with a smile of superiority; "a next of kin, or representative—"

"*This* gentleman is poor Mrs. Stanley's representative," interrupted Robson, mistaking his drift — "her sole executor and legatee."

Off went the hat of the lawyer's clerk. I was not, then, as he had supposed, the undertaker's clerk, arranging the funeral ceremony?

In that case, sir," said he, turning ectfully towards me, " I may spare my- the trouble of all further inquiries. My ness is with you. You will, perhaps, ur my employers (solicitors to the exe- rship of Mr. Stanley's estate) with the e of your man of business, with whom will immediately communicate touching administration to the infant."

inding myself completely in the dark, I kly told him so. " What possible busi- could I have with the executors of Mr. ley's estate?"

Only, sir, that by a sad oversight on his one of the frequent fatal results, sir, of ntleman in a moment of petulance making own will, instead of consulting his legal sers, Mr. Stanley took no precautions nst so probable a contingency as the death is posthumous child, during its minority; no provision being made to the contrary, whole of his fine fortune, sir, lapsed to

the mother, as sole heir to the infant. Mrs. Stanley's having survived the child a couple of days, will be the means of depriving the brother-in-law of her late husband of something like ninety thousand pounds—ninety thousand pounds, sir, besides the house we are in, and other valuable realties."

"You really mean," said Robson, (for I admit that *I* was too much startled for speech,) "that the whole of my master's property will, after all, escape the fangs of those cruel mischief-making people, whose officious interference drove him into his grave?"

"I mean, Mr. Robson, that every guinea of it belongs to Mrs. Stanley's representative or representatives," replied the clerk, with a deprecating bow towards myself.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Percy, sir, I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart!" cried the old man. "God knows I did not think any thing in this world could afford me a moment's pleasure again! But

serve it, sir, and twice as much!—Yes!
hly deserve it!—the interposition of
ence has done this, to reward you for
goodness in this house."

lawyer's clerk, on the contrary, was
ed that it was the interposition of the
ich had stood my friend; and the
obsequiousness of his manner attested
was eager to be considered my friend
I was too much bewildered, however,
ore than refer him to the solicitor at
r, for a sight of Mrs. Stanley's will, in
ation of my claims.

essions of disinterestedness are ever
us things. Yet I cannot help relying
e reader's belief in my assurance that,
moment, this extraordinary—this un-
for—this incredible accession of for-
ossessed no charm for me. I had lost
ing besides fortune. I had lost the
whom my soul delighted. My last
was lying in the chamber overhead—

a shrouded corpse.—What signified money?—What signified silver and gold?—Would they bring back to my ear the dear voices I was to hear no more?—Would they again enclasp in mine the hands whose touch was denied me for ever?—No, no! Riches were mockery *now!*—

Before four-and-twenty hours had elapsed, other thoughts had, of course, possession of my mind. There was some pleasure in thinking of the liberal reward I should be able to bestow on those who had ministered to the last hours of my departed friend; above all, in knowing that a comfortable, happy home would be provided for the old age of poor old Mary.

Nay, it was a satisfaction to think that I had it in my power to raze to the ground the hated walls of Lisbon House, which had witnessed so much care, so much wretchedness! I determined, even before the head of Ethel was laid in the grave, that the

hare should pass over the little gar-
hat the fountain, with its bubbling
, should be overthrown; that even
inous old cedar-tree should be levelled
e dust—humbled as *she* had been
, and like *her* laid low.

ery first interview with the Windsor
, however, gave a new turn to the
of my ideas. Long employed by the
Stanley for the transaction of local
, he was sufficiently aware of the
and extent of his property, to wish
on having succeeded to a princely
The two thousand a-year bequeathed
Stanley by his parents had been more
ubled under his administration; and
yer began forthwith to enlarge on the
f his client's Buckinghamshire farms,
canal property, his East India stock,
way shares, his long annuities, his I
ot what; till it appeared to *me* that
ing short of the mines of Golconda

was included in this miraculous inheritance. His deference towards me knew no bounds. Instead of a poor Honourable,—a miserable Lieutenant in the Guards,—*I* had progressed into a Man of Capital!—

God forbid that it should transform *me* to the degree in which it had affected the character of Barty Brookes!—

Only a little month before, and how different a train of reflection would have arisen from this unexpected stroke of fortune. To be shared with Harriet, how different an aspect would it have assumed! How much larger, in that case, had been half, than now the whole! God forgive me! I am afraid that my joy, under such circumstances, would almost have reconciled me to the loss of my hapless friend.

It was not, however, till I had presided at the last sacred rites due to her memory, that I suffered myself to give my thoughts to worldly interests. After turning with a

heart from hearing the dust rattled
her coffin, I had hardly courage to bear
ongratulations of my friend, John Bar-
who had been apprized by Robson of
ngular change of circumstances.

ther to get away from the regiment
void all chance of coarse allusions on the
f Lord James, than for the purpose of
lting the lawyers, I had already obtained
of absence; and on the evening of the
l, I hurried to town.

aving the nightingales singing as though
would burst their throats for joy
e gardens that were now mine, I pro-
l, in the fragrant stillness of twilight, to
n.

first visit was to the solicitor of the
. Yes—I was indeed rich beyond my
t anticipations. They admitted my
to be unimpugnable. The executors
prepared to take out letters of admi-

nistration to the infant, and make over the property at once. The brother-in-law seemed to feel that his vexation would be eased by getting rid of every trace of the business.

My interviews with these moneyed people had, I cannot deny, a curious influence on my mind. Unaccustomed to hear a fortune spoken of as a mine to be worked, rather than as a blessing to be enjoyed, I had not talked to them an hour before I began to discern a sort of vitality in money. Its procreative power seemed to double its importance. *Who* was to limit the extent of its reproduction?—What rich man but might become immediately rich?—For, as the shifts of poverty beget greater poverty, capital is made to beget capital, like the multiplication of some swarming insect tribe.

Alas! instead of sickening at these demonstrations of lucre-love, as only a month previously would have been the case, the theme

owing pleasant. The discussion ap-
to enlighten my eyes on a thousand
hitherto obscure. Prodigious vistas
suddenly into the mysteries of life.
ght I could see further into the actions
spects of my fellow-creatures; and I
(will it be believed?) more indulgent
th Barty himself.

, in early life an eyewitness of the
interest of financial operations, as
a participant in the comforts of
e,—Barty had certainly some little
for his endeavours to extricate him-
n the miserable poverty into which
been flung by his relations in order
orge the consequence of the head of
ly.

after a second interview with, not the
brother-in-law, self-frustrated of his
nce, but with the sober, solid, demure,
ken Justinian Broadham, Esq., the
g member of parliament, I could un-

derstand that, to a family established on the broad basis of thousands per annum, and thousands of acres open to the sun, my wretched substance of a pair of colours and a few hundreds a-year, must have placed me in the light of a despicable Johnny Lackland; so as to render excusable in the eyes of Miss Brookes's friends any attempt, of whatever nature, to save her from throwing herself away on a lot so replete with disgrace.

Doubtless, my old friend Barty *had* done his best to circumvent the match. But he had not acted treacherously! I had been forewarned of his objection to the acquaintance. I had been apprized of his opposition to the intimacy. He had never affected to encourage my attachment. What right, therefore, had I to complain? Though I had largely befriended *him*, it was with my purse, with my strong arm, in getting him out of scrapes and quarrels; and these obligations he had repaid. But when had I ever offered

charming sister, to be degraded into
panion for life?—
such flimsy sophistry did I deceive
; and having completely satisfied my
at it was only my want of means to
her as she deserved that had actuated
duct of her brother, I took a despe-
solution. What had occurred—what
vitably occurred,—might be no less
to them than to myself. They might
willing as I was to accept advances
them under circumstances more pro-

out hesitating a moment after this
had entered my head, I drove straight
land Place. In some contingencies,
ce explanations are best. I would see
A single glance at his face, while
lanations were making, would satisfy
d whether the offence offered me were
l, or the mere result of the contra-
of life.

We were now in the middle of July. On my way toward the west end from Mr. Broadham's house of business in Lombard Street, the Bedford Square purlieus of the town, which I had to traverse, were all but deserted. The Bloomsbury folks, who go into the country to eat strawberries, and see their roses blow, had deserted their town quarters; and the unsophisticated, who prefer sea-bathing, when even the ocean is tepid, were probably at the coast. The Juckeson tribe, I feared, might be at Cowes.

Precisely!—When I reached the number in Portland Place, stigmatized by its fashionable neighbours as "*C'est Selon*," or the "Spice Islands," and described by the newspapers as "the splendid mansion of Mr. Brookes," I saw that it was closed for the season. Not a shutter open,—not so much as the single dining-room window, purporting to indicate that "master is sometimes in town for a day or two, on business."

at would I have given, at that moment,
e found it open and animated!—Half
ewly-acquired fortune! Before I got
as Langham Place on my way to my
however, I turned back; resolved, at
to inquire Barty's country address, that
ıt lose no time in writing to him. I
y knew that the family was not ex-
to visit Larch Lodge.

deaf and dirty housemaid who opened
oor, evidently sullen at being inter-
in her "cleaning up," was little dis-
to understand or answer. At length
ought me a slip of paper, that had been
r the re-direction of the newspapers;
e next moment I was off, almost at a
, towards Charing Cross, to take my
in the mail. Barty and his wife were
ly at Oak Hill; and whatever explana-
were to be made, might be made in
, and to the united family. For I had
eral invitation to the Mandevales—

friendly people,—whose young friends gradually progressed into old friends, and whose steady good will and good nature were unsusceptible of ebb or flow.

Once on the road, by way of keeping up my resolution, I kept congratulating myself on my courage in starting at once, in spite of appointments with solicitors and proctors; making the business on which depended all the happiness of my future life, its first object. Right pleasant was the cool of the night for travelling; and my sole companion being a young country clergyman, returning to his cure, after a visit to his relations, with as ample subject for his reveries as I for mine, the journey was undisturbed, save by the occasional starts of a lover's fears.

If, after all, the strange conduct, the strange silence preserved towards me by Harriet, should *not* be the result of compulsion, or even over-persuasion,—if she should be changed,—if she should have ceased to love

—But no—it was *impossible!*—Such
weening affection as mine *could* not have
otten a slight attachment in return. She
t dearly love, she must *still* love the man
prized that preference beyond all the
er objects of existence! Fortune, fame,
lition,—every thing but honour—would I
e sacrificed at any moment without de-
, to have secured her precious love!—
nd if I had thought and felt this at
dsor, or in London, how much more, as
y step we advanced, drew me nearer to-
ls *her!*—That well-remembered road!
last time I traversed it, six months be-
what heart-beating hours were those
umed in the journey!—How I then con-
ed and reconsidered the little cadeaux I
brought her; and though I had admired
at the moment of purchase, discovered,
ur interview approached, how unworthy
were of being offered!
ut what I experienced on my former

journey was light as a feather, compared with the emotions that distracted me now—*now* that I was come to say, "Not even your unkindness, beloved, has availed to alienate my affection! I am come again, to grovel at your feet—I am come again, to say, be my wife, my friend, my household ruler!—I am come again, opulent and independent; and all I have is yours.—Dispose of it—dispose of *me!*—But, in return, restore me that cherished place in your heart, which, Heaven knows, I have done nothing to forfeit!"—

Lucky for me, perhaps, that the mail stopped nearly twenty miles from the secluded neighbourhood of Oak Hill; so that I had nearly three hours' posting before me, when, at eight in the morning, I took leave of my companion. There needed the open face of day, and the irritation of provokingly stupid postboys, to restore me to myself. Neither bribery nor threats would induce them to risk their horses, or their necks.

t was, consequently, about eleven before I
ched the village I had to traverse. The
akfast hour of Oak Hill was long past.
o knows but I might catch a glimpse of
rriet's white dress in the garden; or per-
s encounter Barty himself, with his fishing-
dle, making his way to one of the finest
ıt-streams in England.

' Get on!" cried I, as in the very centre
he village, towards the church, the post-
s thought proper to slacken their pace, as
boys do in villages, to receive nods of
gnition from the cottage doors.—"How
y times must I tell you to get on!"—
ut, having put my head out of the win-
, to add due force to my exhortations, I
eived that the obstacle which impeded
way, or rather the obstacle to which the
and horses seemed disposed to concede
reverence, was a profusion of flowers
the road. As far as the eye could
, roses and acacia blossoms scattered

upon the summer dust;—that is, *not* as far as the eye could reach, but as far as the church porch.—There, the shower of blossoms ended; and I now perceived that the cracked bells of the old church were jangling a merry peal.

A wedding—a wedding of some moment,—an event as rare in that quiet neighbourhood as it was auspicious.—*A wedding!*—My heart danced within me at the very name!

But while uttering my outcry to the post-boy, my face had been recognized in the village. A certain Joe Hanson, an old favourite of mine, as one of Mandevale's under-keepers whom I had formerly tipped handsomely to secure me a good place in the coverts, stepped forward, hat in hand, to the chaise-window, to welcome me to Suffolk.

"But you're too late, Cap'n!" said he, evidently a little the worse for early cheer, "you're *just* too late! The weddingers, and the rest of the grand folks, was off for the

half an hour agone. Sure you must heard the two fieldpieces, Cap'n, as the ers let off at the North Lodge, when the iages started from the door?"

What weddingers, Joe, — *what* grand s?" said I: a horrible presentiment all strangling my utterance.

My lord and Miss Harriet, Cap'n. I ght, maybe, you was come for the wed-. Sure," added he, misinterpreting my of blank consternation, "sure you re-ber the young lady as bides with old ame Brookes, up at Oak Hill?"—

She was married this morning, then, to Donnington?"

Why, don't your honour hear the *bells?*" Joe, by way of reply. "There was a r of fine folks in the church. The Park y, in course; and the widdy lady from Danes; and Miss Harriet's rich brother, Lon'on, with his young wife; and Sir id and *his* lady, from the North; and a

deal more,—bridesmaids and bridesmen, and what not; and they say Miss Harriet's to have a place at court, and will eat on gold and silver, all as one as a queen!"

With a vague, foolish smile, I asked him for a glass of water, and having enforced with a sovereign my request that he would not mention to any living soul at the Hall, or Oak Hill, having seen me, bade the postboys resume the high road, and make for the nearest post-town, at about two miles' distance.

"Stop!" said I, as they were about to crack their whips for departure, (probably considering their inconsistent customer fit only for a strait-waistcoat) and beckoning Joe again to the window, I made him pick up for me one of the faded flowers from the road.

He offered, of course, to bring me a fresh rose from the nearest cottage-garden, in place of the faded thing, bespoiled with dust, which he placed in my hand, and for which he refused to accept the further gratuity I flung

—How little did he dream, poor fellow,
t that flower was to *me!*—I have kept it
since!—So long as I live—not long, per-
—it shall have a place near my heart!

---

uch is my friend's simple version of a tale
very-day occurrence, yet replete with the
treacheries engendered by lucre-love;
eed it be added, that the false represen-
ns of Mr. Brookes had induced the pre-
ate act of his sister? Little exaggeration
sufficed to convince her, that the devoted
tions of poor Percy, at Datchet, were
essed to the fair widow and her jointure,
r than to the sad widow and her death-

nvinced that she was betrayed, she
been tempted to betray in her turn.
een Lady Georgiana Trench, who had
er heart on making the warm-hearted,
uous Percy, her own, and Barty, who
dered his sister's disdain of Donnington

Castle and twenty thousand a year, a folly, nay, a crime, which her family would be unpardonable in sanctioning,—the mild, inexperienced girl was sacrificed for life!—

For life?—Alas! her penance was not of long duration. *Too* long, however, for she lived to be undeceived.—She lived to learn the truth.—It was not till the summer of the following year, that the grass was growing upon her grave!—

END OF VOL. I.

Frederick Shoberl, Junior, Printer to His Royal Highness Prince Albert,
51, Rupert Street, Haymarket, London.

MEN OF CAPITAL.

VOLUME II.

EN OF CAPITAL.

BY

MRS. GORE,

AUTHORESS OF

"THE BANKER'S WIFE," "PEERS AND PARVENUS," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE

MAN OF CAPITAL;

OR,

)LD FAMILIES AND NEW.

CHAPTER I.

England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds.

SHAKSPEARE.

I shall be rather curious to know who bought Deasmarsh," observed a middle-d country lady to a middle-aged country tleman, as they sat watching the decline day, one summer evening, over the vast et of landscape visible from the lofty win-vs of a sitting-room which, in defiance of gentilities of modern parlance, and the tensions of their family-seat, they chose

to call a parlour.—And both gentleman a lady, both landscape and the square ill-fu nished chamber to which it afforded almost unbounded view, were of so featurele and uninteresting an order, that there w some excuse for Mrs. Cromer's regarding as somewhat important incident, the sale of a co siderable farm situated in the same parish their own dull mansion of Cromer Hall.

"It is a thousand pities but what one old Smith's daughters could have kept from going out of the family," added t Squire's lady, hoping to startle her husba from a reverie nearly approaching to a doze.

"Old Smith's three daughters are marri to London tradesmen, whose husbands a on the look-out for ready money,—not f a Northamptonshire farm,—" rejoined t Squire.—"It was always understood that, the old man's death, the property would b sold.—These are not times when people business can afford to sink any part of thei

tal in land;—a losing game, God knows, is part of the country!"—

ne proverb tells us it is a rash thing to e a sleeping lion.—It is not *wise* to rouse eping any thing—nor even a dozing one. people wake up in their most benign of ers.

At all events," persisted Mrs. Cromer, did not seem aware of her danger—" it uch to be regretted that Deasmarsh could be bought by some person belonging to neighbourhood."—

And why, pray?—In the first place, not mily hereabouts possesses the means of such a purchase. The upshot price of smarsh is fifteen thousand pounds!— n if, by means of mortgage, the purchase been effected by Farmer Richards, what ld have become of the land, in the hands eople without loose money to lay out?— ld Smith's possession, it has gone to rack ruin."—

"Let us hope, then, at least, that it will be bought by moneyed people," said Mrs. Cromer, turning to what she considered the safe side of the question.—"As your brother was saying the other day, my dear, when he wanted to stir you up into bidding for the property, it would be a great thing for the parish to get an active thriving man at Deasmarsh."

"A great thing for the parish?—Why couldn't he say, at once, a good thing for the parson?"—rejoined Mr. Cromer. "Jacob is the most selfish fellow in the world! Jacob is always thinking of number one!—Instead of wanting an active man at Deasmarsh, all he looked to in suggesting the purchase to me (when he knew I could just as easily buy in Belvoir Castle!) was to secure himself *against* having an independent man in the farm, who might make himself troublesome in the vestry, and thrust his finger into the parish pie!"—

"I really think Jacob wished you to en-

ur to buy the land, because it is likely
for a song," argued his wife.—" No
etition is expected. In fact, it is more
ikely to be bought in. In this out-of-
ay corner of the county, what is there
ract strangers?"

ittle enough, I admit. But depend
it Jacob had no other object in pes-
me about it, but to better his living.
he is, in clover, in his snug parsonage,
a few hundreds a year as well off as
ler brother! For *my* part, I often wish
en born a second son, and enjoyed the
living instead of the family estate,
entails endless plagues, and loses in
every year!"—

)o not forget, however, that, as the
, the living reverts to your second son;
as, Jacob must provide for those who
after him out of his income, or by insuring
e."—

f he *have* laid by out of his income, why

"And so it does!" cried her brother-in-law, regardless of the impatient shrug of the shoulders with which the Squire habitually silenced the observations of his wife; "and unless I'm much mistaken, Ghrimes is the man who receives his rent! I have seen Ghrimes once or twice in the village, within the last few years; and I'm sure I don't know what else could bring him here."

"You conclude, then," was the surly rejoinder of his brother, "that Ghrimes's client is now the owner of Deasmarsh and Hutton's farm; and, in that case, the most considerable landed proprietor in Deaswold?"—

"I have a shrewd guess such will turn out to be the case!" rejoined his brother. "Provoking enough, considering what the Cromers have been in this parish, for more than three centuries past! However, *that* standing, John, no one can take from us; and as this cotton-spinning or stocking-weaving gentleman, or whatever he may happen to be, is

likely to show his face here to oppress
h his wealth and consequence, we are
s better off than if Richards or some
farmer of these parts had made a stretch
omplish the purchase."

Squire, however, had been too long
in Thule to have much taste for abdi-
even the shadow of his wooden sceptre.
as the lofty spire of Deaswold was
, he fancied that his sovereignty was
vledged. The manor had been in his
ever since the cessation of the war of
o Roses; and though to this dignity
tached an estate within some hundreds
thousand a year, as the Cromers from
son were an unambitious generation,
g nothing on a shallow pretence at Lon-
shion, or speculations still more peril-
had hitherto sufficed their utmost pre-
s. The great square brick Hall which
ed the country round from the top of a
ly-wooded hill, through windows whose

white bordering gave them the staring look imparted to the human eye by flaxen eyelashes, still held up its head self-satisfied and unrivalled. If, by some rare chance, a traveller, wrecked upon the parish, demanded *whose* was that frightful place, the respectful manner in which the urchins on the road replied that it was "the Squire's," while their mothers tugged at their shoulder and amended the vague reply into "Squire Cromer's, if you please, sir," satisfied every inquiring mind, that, though Squire Cromer's house might be unsightly and his lands unpicturesque, he was a great man, after all. As indeed he was. At Deaswold the Squire was monarch of all he surveyed. His brother Jacob, reared in the ultra-conservative principles of the last century, which required the juniors of a family whose estates were entailed, to honour not only their father and mother, but their elder brother, paid far more respect to the Squire's authority than it deserved.

'or that the Cromers were an unambitious eration resulted from the weakness rather n the strength of their minds. Too unin- gent to suggest improvement, either in nselves or their belongings, the extensive perty attached to the Hall was farmed by Squire precisely on the same principles it been farmed by his grandsire. Of modern rovements in rural economy, he knew ning, and took care not to improve his wledge either by reading or observation; le, as to refurnishing or remodelling his se, nothing short of a fire would have ven him to so dire an extremity. It was article of religion with him that every g should remain in the state in which, at marriage of his father, sixty years before, mer Hall had been fitted up in honour of bride.

For some generations past, indeed, the family maintained its consequence by the lucky itation of its olive-branches. Whenever

these chanced to exceed the couple of sons to be maintained by farm and glebe, the pruning-hook of measles or hooping-cough was sure to reduce the family to the dimensions provided for by the wisdom of their ancestors; and as there was consequently no incentive to the Squire regnant to increase his means by the exercise of his wits for the benefit of younger children, the wits and estate were allowed to lie fallow together.

But with the uninteresting couple that now filled the throne of squirearchy, matters were different. In addition to two cubs rearing at Rugby, there were three daughters at school in the neighbourhood of London; the necessity of laying by fortunes for whom served at once to render their parents less hospitable than their predecessors, and dispose their neighbours to see as little as might be of so provident a couple.

This system of things, however, did not extend to the Rectory. Though the worthy

ob had a daughter to provide for by his
omies, he saw no cause to render life a
hen because he was one day or other to
t down. From the impulses of a genial
re rather than of a reasoning mind, he
disposed to extract enjoyment from what-
came in his way: the common gifts of
vidence,—the ordinary companionships of
Fine weather,—a pleasant walk,—a
erful friend,—sufficed to make the warm-
rted parson thankful and content.

While something less than a mile divided
Hall from the Parsonage, leagues and
ues intervened between the dispositions
he two brothers; and though for many
rs past they had met daily, it was strange
little the temper of the one had rubbed
on the character of the other. The Squire
not gained an inch towards rendering
jovial junior either surly or sordid; and
ugh Jacob's merry-mindedness *did* occa-
ally induce a transient expansion of spirit

on the part of the Squire and his wife, it was only to relapse into cheerlessness as soon as he quitted the Hall.

Absorbed by the interests of his farm, Mr. Cromer's face had always a careworn look; and when not occupied in directing his men or disputing with his tenants, he went moping about the country on an old bay mare, as dull and sullen as himself, as if unconscious that there existed a world to be cared for, or souls to be saved, beyond the bounds of the manor of Deaswold.

In the mind of such a man, considerable curiosity was necessarily excited by the transfer of so large a portion of the property bordering his own to hands unknown. From the tenants of Deasmill and another small farm included in the sale of Deasmarsh, he vainly endeavoured to learn more than that, for the short remainder of their leases, the rent was to be paid to 'Torney Ghrimes; but, with the tenant of Hutton's he was on such uneasy

ıs, in consequence of game-preserving
.bbles, as to be unable even to address
self to *him* for information touching the
tity of the new landlord and the old.
Squire was forced, therefore, to chew the
of his discontent at having lost so golden
pportunity, with all the aggravation of
knowing precisely upon whom to wreak
pite.

I suppose, John, you've heard the news?"
l the Rector on meeting his brother one
about a month afterwards, on his return
a trip to Northampton.

What news do I *ever* hear!" was the
ish rejoinder of the Squire. "You, I pre-
e, have seen Ghrimes, and discovered at
the name of your new parishioner?"—

Better than that!—a plaguy deal better
that!" resumed Jacob, rubbing his
ls: "I have heard news, my dear John,
will put some thousand pounds into your
ket!"

"Some thousand pounds into *my* pocket? —Come, come!" exclaimed the Squire, unwrinkling without further hesitation the deep furrows of his brow.

"The new branch of the Midland Counties' Railroad is to cut right through the heart of Deaswold!"—cried Jacob, with a countenance that glowed like the meridian sun.

"A railway through Deaswold?"

"Where even a turnpike-road appeared a blessing past praying for!" added the Rector. "I take it you will nearly double the value of your property."

"But are you certain of all this, Jacob?" persisted the Squire. "Remember the canal vagary you got into your head ten years ago!"—

"Ay, ay! but this time, I have seen the plans.—I can't understand, by the way, how that fellow Ghrimes, as solicitor to the company, managed to get the parish so accu-

surveyed without our knowledge!—
what's more, I've taken half a dozen
s on my own account."

This is the most extraordinary business!"
ılated the Squire, thrusting his oaken
under his arm, and crossing his hands
tation-wise over his chest. "When the
ch was talked of at the quarter sessions,
ly a year back, the line did not come
in three miles of us;—not nearer, in
t, than Basinghill."

That was before the engineers had been
ork, my dear fellow! But now all is
ged; and they even talk of a station
ewhere betwixt Deaswold and Darley
l!"

God bless my soul!—And pray did you
ee the direction of the line through my
erty?—Thank goodness, it cannot come
near the house!"

There were so many people crowding,
nquiring, and congratulating, in Ghrimes's

office," replied Jacob, whose mind was of anything but a circumstantial turn, "that I cannot be exact to a field or two. I only know that it does not touch the glebe. But, no doubt, you will get an application from Ghrimes before long."—

That night, for the first time in his life, the Squire of Cromer Hall did not so much as close his eyes! — Such an unexpected stroke of good fortune! El Dorado suddenly expanding at his feet! — Whenever he attempted to sleep, visions floated before his mind's eye of engineers with strange instruments, mysterious to his illiterate mind as those of an alchymist or astrologer, taking levels in his valley, or piercing his hill-side with a tunnel. Had he possessed a horse strong enough to carry him twenty miles, hardly would he have abided till morning to make the best of his way to Ghrimes's office, and ascertain for how many acres of land he should be privileged to play the extortioner.

he was forced to wait till morning, for passing of the heavy coach through ghill, at two miles' distance from the

No matter!" thought he, when, as it in sight, he surrendered the bridle of d bay to the hands of the slovenly boy mounted on a half-broken colt, served for groom. "The railroad will set all sort of thing to rights."

Well — who was right?" inquired his -humoured brother, who walked to meet oach the following day, on his return.

I don't know what you mean about ," was the surly rejoinder. "You told Ihrimes would apply to me in favour of iew line."

Well?"

Well! my answer to his application was, I should instantly petition against it."— Against the branch line through Deas- ?"

"About what other am I interested? I consider myself scandalously ill-used in the affair. Here is a railroad,—one of the most serious nuisances that can affect a man's property,—about to run right under my nose, within half a mile of a mansion which has belonged to my family from generation to generation, and to which it will cause the utmost injury and disparagement."

"Injury and disparagement to the Hall?" reiterated his astonished brother.

"And *I* am the last person whom these unprincipled speculators have thought proper to consult about the matter!" resumed his brother, "though my experience and knowledge of the localities would have enabled me to supply gratuitously all the information in which this pettifogging Northampton attorney is wanting."

"Don't abuse Ghrimes!—Every one admits Ghrimes to be the best lawyer in the county," rejoined the Rector, a little shocked. "No

ever called Ghrimes of Northampton a
ifogger!"

I called him an impertinent ass, no later
last night,—ay, and within his hearing
if he had chosen to take notice of it,"
ined the Squire, nettled beyond all self-
rol.

or, alas! by virtue of some species of
rdemain which the nobility and gentry,
other landed proprietors of the county,
besotted enough to call engineering
ce, it had been decided by the advisers
he new company that not an acre of
re Cromer's land should be in request!
fatal line was to run

Still out of reach, but never out of view.

so much as a guinea of compensation
d fall to the share of the proprietor of
er Hall!

Though a blind man might see the ad-
ge of cutting direct from Basinghill
gh the Westwold Slopes," resumed the in-

dignant Squire, "Ghrimes and his squad hav
made it convenient to run the line straigh
through Hutton's farm;—and what with th
land to be purchased there, and at Darle
Level for the erection of the station, this pre
cious "manufacturing-district" client of his
— this born-with-a-silver-ladle-in-his-mouth
Mr. Mordaunt,—will net no less than thirtee
thousand pounds!—*Thirteen thousand pounds*
Jacob Cromer!—of which, had I possessed
single friend in the county to advise me, ever
guinea ought to have gone into my own
pocket!—And now, pray, do you wonder a
my determination to oppose the line?"—

CHAPTER II.

ade, without enlarging the British territories, has
us a kind of additional empire. It has multiplied
umber of rich, made our landed estates infinitely more
able than formerly, and added to them accessions as
able as the lands themselves.

ADDISON.

he irritations of body and mind expe-
ced by an envious man like Squire Cromer,
le the railroad which his fretful opposi-
injured no more than the vast tunnel at
nghill Cliff would have been hurt by the
ts of a sparrow flying against the abut-
t, will be readily imagined.

he influx of strange workmen into the
sh, during the progress of the works, to
utter destruction of his preserves and
it-warren, his fish-ponds and dovecot,
ed to keep his resentments perpetually

green; and wondrous, indeed, must have bee the convenience afforded by the rail, whe opened to the public, had it sufficed to re concile him to his previous annoyances.

But the truth was, that no family coul benefit less by such a change than the one a Cromer Hall. So much the reverse of loco motive were their habits of life, that it wa not before the Christmas vacation, that th line opened at Midsummer was available t the use of any individual of the name o Cromer, save the hearty Jacob;—whereas the complete transformation, or, rather, cor ruption of the hitherto stagnant neighbour hood, became an immediate nuisance. Mag dalen Cromer, the eldest of the Squire's thre daughters, having attained her seventeenth year, was now settled at home, as "finished," and "out;" and though, in former years, th girls had been in the habit of walking con stantly across the fields, to visit their littl cousin Emma, at Deaswold Rectory, now

those once solitary meadows were per-
ally infested by strangers, of all condi-
s, on their way to the Darley Station, the
ins were forced to remain at home, and
t, unless when a servant could be in
ndance, or the good-natured rector serve
scort to either his daughter or niece.
his sister-in-law was too much of a Mrs.
able to stir beyond her garden gate;
e the Squire himself was never known to
ct his steps into the village on a week
unless in search of the constable to im-
nd a stray donkey, or secure some vagrant
ne cage.—

Can you tell me, papa," inquired Mag-
n, at dinner, one day, after returning
n a visit to her cousin, "why they are
ling the beautiful pastures at Deasmarsh,
throwing up such immense mounds of
h?"

Some new vagary, connected with the
way, I presume," replied her father, pet-

tishly;—"in which case, Madge, I'm sure you heard no fault found with it at the Rectory!—Your uncle considers every thing connected with the rail a blessing to the parish!"

"The interests of his parishioners are improved by it, I believe," replied Magdalen,—"which suffices to enlist my uncle as its champion.—But the new works can scarcely have any connexion, papa, with the railway. They are half a mile distant from the nearest point."

"Near old Smith's farm, then?"

"Near what *was* his farm—the last outhouse, you know, has long disappeared."—

"I know nothing about the matter, Magdalen. There is no object to attract *me* in that direction."—

The Squire *was*, however, soon attracted in that direction, by receiving, from various quarters, the same inquiry he had been unable to answer to his daughter.—Nor

was he long able to plead ignorance in reply.—

Foundations for a magnificent mansion house were actually laid at Deasmarsh!—The workmen employed were workmen from town. The materials were brought down by the railroad. But the moment the Rector exhibited an interest in the subject, the information he wished to obtain was not long a secret.—

"The mansion was building for Mr. Mordaunt, the new proprietor, as his future residence; and would be finished, furnished, and inhabited, within two years' time."

"Just such taste as one might have expected from a Manchester cotton-spinner!" cried the Squire, with a gesture of angry contempt, on hearing the explanation:—"to build a house, that might serve for a palace, in a field of half-a-dozen acres!"—

Nor till, at the close of the year, he saw the hedges of a dozen adjacent meadows

rooted up, the inequalities of the ground levelled in some parts, to obtain a view of the river, and clothed with plantations in others, while every tree or clump of trees that could tend to the adornment of the estate was carefully protected, could he be made to believe that the straggling old paddocks of Deasmarsh were susceptible of being converted into any thing so nearly resembling a park. When united by a ring fence with Hutton's farm, it became a handsome domain.—

Whatever travellers by the rail might be thenceforward tempted to inquire, "Whose was the frightful old house at the top of the hill?" would lose all interest in the reply to the question, the moment the fine property of Mr. Mordaunt lay developed before them.

"If my father could but rise from his grave, and see every thing about poor old Cromer Hall gone to rack and ruin!" was the seemingly pathetic cry of the Squire,

two years afterwards,- as he toiled up his parched paddocks to his unsightly home, after beholding Mr. Mordaunt's handsome carriage turn into his lodge-gates, towards the beautiful seat created by the large fortune amassed by his industry.

And as his complaints were addressed to one accustomed to sympathize in his feelings, or respectfully withhold her dissent—his dutiful daughter,—he escaped being told in return, as would have happened had Farmer Richards been present, that, could old Squire Cromer have foreseen that the value of his property would be increased twenty per cent. by the conversion of Deaswold into a striving and thriving parish, he would have admitted that there existed better modes of providing dowries for his daughters than by pinching a limited income, and getting the savings farmed by a country attorney.—

Up to that moment, grand discussions had been carrying on in the village as to whether

the Squire's family would choose to visit the new-comers, already looked down upon, as manufacturers, in a district purely agricultural; and Magdalen, who, with a mother so occupied by household cares, and no other companion save her cousin Emma at the Rectory, several years younger than herself in age and several more in volatility, and, consequently, more of a plaything than a friend,—began to think that a country life might be improved by some addition to the *dramatis personæ*,—would have given much for courage to inquire of her parents their intentions on the subject.

"I wonder," she at length ventured to say to her pretty little cousin, (whose mother, having died during her early childhood, she had obtained, in her father's house, the ascendancy usually conceded to an only child) "I wonder, dear Emma, what change the arrival of these new people will produce among us, besides exciting envy by their suc-

sion-houses and conservatories! For the
t month, papa has been more violent than
ver knew him against what he calls up-
rts and shopkeepers."—

" But what does *that* signify?—Mr. Mor-
ınt is not a shopkeeper."

" He does not, however, belong to one of
county families."

" No, indeed, my dear Madge! Talk to
ı five minutes, and you will easily find it
!—Except my own dear father, I never
so pleasant or gentlemanly a man!"

" You have seen him, then?"

" He sent in his name yesterday, before
had finished breakfast."

" And my uncle received him without he-
ation?"

" A clergyman and magistrate is public
perty, you know."

" Mr. Mordaunt came on business, then?"
sisted Miss Cromer.—

" He made his appearance, saying, he had

taken the liberty of coming to pay hi
respects to the Rector of his parish.—And
thanks to my father's hearty cordial dispo
sition, they were friends in half an hour!"—

"That looks well for Mr. Mordaunt!"
said Magdalen, frankly. "But, I am afraid
things will not be managed quite so smoothly
at the Hall.—Papa has already some kind o
grudge against him. Besides considering
him an intruder into the neighbourhood—or
rather, that the Deasmarsh estate was bought
over his head,—he has had a misunderstanding
with Mr. Mordaunt's bailiff, about water
courses, or something of that kind."—

"Oh! but that sort of rubbish will soo
be got over, between such near neighbours
whose interest it is to live on friendly
terms!" cried Emma.

Magdalen sighed. She was afraid not
She had begun to discover that the animo
sities and prepossessions of persons leading a
uneventful life are apt to expand into a lazy

holesome exuberance, like that of fish in
nant waters.

But I shall be able to tell you more
ıt them all to-morrow, my dear Madge,"
med her cousin, "for we dine at Deas-
sh this very day."

You dine at Deasmarsh to-day?"—cried
s Cromer, aghast at so rapid a progress of
ıaintance.

Yes,—Mr. Mordaunt said it would be
pleasantest way of presenting his whole
ily to our acquaintance. And papa, who
ı at once to a person as open-hearted as
self, did not so much as make the objec-
I anticipated, that I was too young too
e out. In a mere family party, he seemed
hink I should not be out of place."

ut it was not *that* idea which had pro-
ed Magdalen's exclamation. It had
ced into her mind that, should an inti-
y be established between the Rectory and
smarsh, in which Cromer Hall disdained

to be included, she should lose the cheerful society of her uncle and cousin; and in return, gain nothing. A sad prospect! For, as it was impossible for a girl of refined and accomplished mind to make to herself so engrossing an interest as her parents, in the petty economy of Cromer Hall, she had already discovered that the summer days were long enough to leave leisure for other diversions than solitary saunterings in the grounds, with no other response to her youthful fancies than the cawing of the rooks.

On the day after the Deasmarsh dinner-party, therefore, Magdalen took care to be betimes at the Rectory. If left to find her way to the Hall, the frank-spoken Emma would either aggravate the prejudices of her uncle and aunt by praises of the Mordaunts; or, perhaps, by some unguarded criticism, afford justification for their antipathy.

"And how did you like Deasmarsh?" said she, coming straight to the point, on finding Emma alone.

"A palace—a perfect palace!" cried the elated child. "So little as I have seen out of this village, it is not wonderful that *I* should be charmed. But my father who, in former days, *did* knock a little about the world, declares that no nobleman's seat could be more richly furnished, or establishment more perfectly appointed."

"I am sorry to hear it," was Magdalen's grave reply. "I want to like the Mordaunts; and surely it is bad taste in people of their class to set up in opposition to the aristocracy?"—

"How like that is to my uncle and aunt!" cried Emma, clapping her hands. "Fie, Madge, fie!—People of *their* class!—People of *what* class?—All we know about the Mordaunts is that they are enormously rich."

"And that their wealth was obtained in trade, and doubled by railway speculation," persisted Magdalen. "It is not *that* I find

fault with; but that they should not understand the fitness of things too well to enter into rivalship with dukes and lords."

"Pho, pho!—Dukes and lords have fine curtains and carpets, and beautiful chairs, tables, and plate in their houses, not because they are lords and dukes, but because they are *rich!*" pleaded little Emma, having laid down her work in the heat of her argument; "and on that point, if Mr. Mordaunt is able to contend with them, why not, pray?"

"At all events, if *disposed* to contend with them," rejoined Miss Cromer, "he will find *us* quite below his sphere."

"Now, Madge,—now, Madge!—When you know that you and the whole family at the Hall look down upon Deasmarsh as—"

"The Hall certainly looks down upon Deasmarsh," rejoined her cousin, with a forced smile, "as well as upon half the parish of Deaswold. But *that* does not imply *hauteur* towards the inhabitants. Tell me,

however, dear cousin, something more about our new neighbours."

"In the first place, then—there is Mr. Mordaunt, an open-hearted, open-handed man, such as my father would have been if equally rich; with a wife a little stately, but nearly as agreeable and sensible as himself. The eldest son (Reresby, they call him,) has not yet made his appearance; but there is a picture of him in the dining-room, which proves his horse and dog to be the handsomest ever seen, and the young man, though the least good-looking of the trio, far from a fright. He will do very well, in short, Madge, for you and I (and Emily and Mary when they come home to take part in our fight) to pull caps about."

"If papa could but hear you!—The Cromers of Cromer Hall pulling caps for the son of a cotton-spinner!—The ten pages we occupy in Burke's Landed Gentry would certainly be inflicted upon you as a task!"

"And a pretty severe one,—considerin how tiresome I find the family genealogy whe recited piecemeal by my uncle!"

"But surely, Emma, I saw a younger fac than Mr. Mordaunt's in the family-pew las Sunday?" inquired Magdalen.

"You *did* take a peep then, Miss Crome of Cromer Hall, at the family of the cotton spinner? Well—well—I *know!*—I do no *really* suppose you to be inoculated with th family prejudices by living under the sam roof with the family plate and pictures!— only wanted what papa calls a rise out o you.—There *is* a daughter, and alas! neare your age than mine."

Already Magdalen's face began to brighten "A most beautiful girl I thought her, whe first introduced to her by her father, wh seemed determined that we should be friends, added Emma.

"And had you so soon occasion to chang your opinion?"

"No,—I still think her beautiful. But not pleasing—not ingratiating—not near so good-looking as *you*, Magdalen."

A deep blush, and a faint ejaculation of "*me!*" proved that even experience had not inured the grave Magdalen to the wild sallies of her cousin.

"In short, coz,—for you know how I hate to have anything on my mind—in short, I suspect we shall find Matilda Mordaunt the least agreeable of the family. I'm sadly afraid she is—" Instead of finishing her sentence, the young lady demurely resumed her work.

"She is—*what?*"

"I hardly like to pronounce the word, convinced as I am that it is what you all expect of the Mordaunts."

"*Vulgar*, perhaps?"

"Worse!—the superlative of vulgarity,—*purse-proud!* Nothing can be handsomer than her face, or more elegant than her

appearance. But there she sat, silent an surly; as if, after detecting the coarseness o my poor unfortunate muslin frock, she ha scarcely patience to turn her head my way.

"This is a sad account!" said Magdalen with a face of concern.

"If it had not been that Mr. Mordaun was at the pains to talk a good deal to me, rejoined the parson's daughter, "having n end of inquiries to make about the villag and neighbourhood, I should have passed a dull an evening as I used at the Hall, Madge before you returned home."

An uplifted finger purported to remind th lively Emma of her cousin's often-repeate warning against including the house of all th Cromers in her playful strictures.

"Mr. Mordaunt and my darling daddy," continued she, without seeming to notice th interdiction, "had of course worlds of busines to discuss about railroad shares, and poor's rates. At last, we overheard them reach from

the village to the Hall; and Mr. Mordaunt did not so much as lower his clear ringing voice to observe, 'I find I am sadly out of Mr. Cromer's good books. My friend Ghrimes prepared me to find him hostilely disposed; and this stupid squabble of Wilkes's, concerning the water-meadows, is likely to create a permanent misunderstanding between us; unless, indeed, my dear sir, I may trust to your kindly interposition to place us upon a more neighbourly footing.'—'Depend upon me—depend upon me,' cried my father. 'As parish priest, to heal grievances is part of my calling, and for the sake of my brother's family, I shall lose no time in promoting an acquaintance with yours. I have a charming niece,—as accomplished as she is amiable,—who would be a great acquisition to Miss Mordaunt.'"

"And what did Miss Mordaunt say to such a suggestion?" inquired Magdalen, with a still more vivid blush than before.

"It was not her cue to speak, for it w
not *her* my father was addressing.—But
caught a glimpse of her face."

"And it did not look, I am afraid, as
she thought I *should* be an acquisition
said Magdalen, with a faint smile.

"She looked, at all events, my dear Mad
as if she would be no acquisition to *yo*
Never in my life did I behold a more f
bidding countenance."

"I am satisfied!" cried Magdalen, kiss
the forehead of her young companion. "
I have not gained a friend by the arrival
the family of Deasmarsh, at least, I have
lost my little cousin."—

CHAPTER III.

re, or Toledo, or other good blade of gentile pur-
uld be counted uselesse among his impleementes.
SIR THOMAS OVERBURY.

daunt of Deasmarsh was what Necker
Napoleon—*l'homme nécessaire*—to pro-
the regeneration of a decaying country.
the moment of acquiring property in
rish of Deaswold, he had made its in-
his own. While his person was still
wn there, not an acre of its land or
of its water but was familiar to him.
on the watch for a more considerable
se, no sooner did he foresee the pro-
that old Smith's farm would lie at his
al than, by his activity in the organiza-
f a branch railway in which he be-
a considerable shareholder, he bespoke

such a direction of the line as at once benefit the property of the company and own.

A prosperous capitalist, unencumbered hereditary engagements or obligations, enabled to will and do, both by strength of mi and strength of pocket, he chose to establi himself at a distance from Burtsmill, t miles distant from Manchester, where his i dependence had been accomplished; not fro false shame at the origin of his fortune, b because resolved to devote the remainder his life to the enjoyment of the fruits of h industry.

"Had I settled in Lancashire, or withi distance of my old place," said he frankly, accounting for himself to his neighbour of th Rectory, "I should have been always inte fering, or longing to interfere; which, no that I have become a sleeping partner, wit the right of introducing hereafter my s into the firm, would only have created je

s. And I preferred creating a new place,
rchasing the seat of some decayed family
the same dislike of being the origin of
urnings. I hate to step into another
shoes."

would have been cruel on the part of
Cromer unnecessarily to apprize his
riend what fierce heartburnings he had
oned to the lord of the manor of Deas-
and Mr. Mordaunt was consequently
o resume.

was always the object of my hopes,
great spur to my industry," said he,
ealize such a capital as would enable me
re from business and enjoy the world like
leman, before I had dwindled down into
n and slippered pantaloon;' and by God's
ıy wish has prospered. Freshley, my for-
artner, was luckily both willing and able
me out of the business within a fourth of
are; and in a couple of years, even *that*
e at my disposal, if I find sufficient

profit and charm in a country life to w
my son, as well as myself, to devote him
exclusively to the duties of a landed p
prietor."

In the course of further conversation
came out that this fourth of Mr. Mordau
fortune amounted to eighty thousand poun
a sum which justified the worthy parson
congratulating himself that the poor of
parish had obtained so opulent a patron.

Unafflicted, by right of primogeniture, w
the feudal instincts rendering the subordi
tion of his tenants and the power of extr
ing the greatest number of pounds sterl
from the acres of the family estate the c
object of his life, Jacob was too good a Ch
tian not to rejoice at finding the rate of a
cultural wages raised in the district, at o
by the operation of the railroad and the
tension of agricultural improvements int
duced by the rich capitalist; and too op
hearted to the interests of his fellow-creatu

perience more than momentary mortifica-
at finding the autocracy of his fore-
rs converted into a divided empire. The
s of Mr. Mordaunt's domiciliation at
narsh reconciled him to the eclipse of
er Hall; and the advantages derived
the railway by the whole country round,
ed his repinings after his rural privacy
mer years.

t, whether as regarded the present or the
matters were otherwise viewed at the Hall.
e grievance of the water-courses became
lished as a cause of feud for ever and aye,
noment the Squire found his labourers
ting him for the service of the new-
r.—It was in vain that Jacob advocated
establishment of peace between the bel-
ents.—

Mr. Mordaunt," he assured his brother,
s a sensible man — a well-intentioned
—a man guided solely by a sense of duty
d, above all, open to argument. — For

their mutual interest, if not for their mut
satisfaction, therefore, it was desirable tha
good understanding should subsist betw
such near neighbours."

But the Squire would not be entreated.

"No—he knew what he was about.
was not going to play second fiddle to
man in Deaswold. Mr. Mordaunt might l
into the parish charters if he liked, and
what the Cromer family had been there
the time of Henry VII."

A hint which rendered it difficult to Jac
who, being somewhat more of a clerk th
his elder brother, knew precisely what ben
the Cromer family had derived from chu
pillage in the reign of Henry VIII. to refr
from a smile.

"Mordaunt has no need to look at
parish charters, my dear John," said
soothingly, "to learn that he must be alw
secondary here to the lord of the man
Nor has he, believe me, the smallest d

tion to encroach upon any of your
ts."

Thank him for nothing! — Because he
t!—The law will take care of *that*."

But it will have a sinecure; for I never
a man more conscientiously inclined to
ine himself within equitable bounds. It
only yesterday, when we were talking
the restoration of my chancel, towards
ch, in consideration of the pew allotted to
smarsh—"

Ay—and what business had the vestry to
t it, I should like to know?"—interrupted
Squire, in a tone to which his brother
ciously turned a deaf ear.

Towards which," continued Jacob, "he
made so munificent a donation—he was
first to observe, while pointing to our
lly achievements, many of which are so
ered and torn that they will scarcely hang
he wall—"

You're not going to sacrifice the trophies

of the Cromer family to this cotton-spin
fellow ?"—interrupted the Squire, with a
almost livid with rage.

"On the contrary, my dear John. I
in the act of relating to you that Mord
was the first to suggest the propriety of ha
them carefully repaired."

"Burnished up and begilt, like a sign-p
by some Birmingham candlestick-make
some cousin, perhaps, of his own !"

"I said — that is *he* said — *repaired*,
restored !" mildly remonstrated the Re
"The object Mordaunt had in view woul
defeated by rendering them ridiculous."

"And what object or business of
kind has he, pray, with the Cromer achi
ments ?"—

"A desire to impress upon the mind
his poorer neighbours, by symbols which
existed before their eyes from genera
to generation, for ages past, that the ri
exercised over them are stable as those of

ne; and that those Deaswolders who fear
, and honour the king, should also respect
family from whose ancestors their fore-
ers obtained bread."

I don't believe he intended anything of
kind !" was the surly retort of the Squire.
r more likely that he wished the people
abouts to see in those old tattered and
ished relics, the appropriate representation
decayed family !—"

But our family is *not* decayed," pleaded
rother. "We are all we ever were. Not
acre of the Cromer estate, my dear John,
ever been alienated. The necessity of
iding for younger children may have pre-
ed enterprise or improvement tending to
nent the rent-roll; but—"

You will not deny, I suppose, that for the
re the possessor of Deasmarsh, whoever
nay be, (for a fortune made in trade may
ost in trade, and the present proprietor go
he dogs, from whence, I believe, he came)

will be the first man in this neighb
hood ?"—

"A necessary consequence of the prog
of times, my dear brother, and no offence
the part of Mr. Mordaunt. Trade and spe
lation have levelled a thousand distinctio
The House of Commons is full of manu
turers, who, half a century hence, if anot
William Pitt should arise, will many of th
be in the House of Peers; and how can
expect to keep an insignificant nook of No
amptonshire free from the influence of a c
which has found its way to the foot of
throne ?"—

"I'll tell you what, Jacob," cried
Squire, unable to contain his angry feelin
"if *you* have lost all sense of family pride
have *not*. Into one house of the insignific
nook of Northamptonshire which you cho
to disparage, this fellow—this cotton-spin
—shall never set his foot !"—

"I am sorry for it—I am heartily sorry

rejoined his brother. "Of course, I can
o more towards mitigating your deter-
tion than by giving you my sincere
ion (as I feel bound to do, both as a
ner and spiritual pastor) that, since we
to have a rich neighbour at Deasmarsh,
re lucky indeed to have obtained one so
and upright as Mordaunt; and I think it
fair to add that I hope to see a great deal
m, both in his house and my own; and
any personal offence offered to him will,
s I see cause to alter my opinion of his
acter, only prompt me to treat him with
er consideration."

hile Jacob was quitting the cheerless,
d room, which, at Cromer Hall, assumed
ame of study, after this manly declara-
till the sound of the Hall door closing
him warned his brother of his departure,
heart of the angry Squire continued to
, almost to bursting, within his narrow
t.

"Spiritual pastor, indeed!"—at length escaped his lips—"As if a black coat entitled a brother five years younger than myself to come and lay down the law to me in my own house! And the more I keep the cotton-spinner at bay, forsooth, the more cringing and obsequious the parson intends to be!—My humble service to you, Reverend Mr. Jacob Cromer! It is as well, at least, to know your intentions. Ungrateful fellow!—After all I have done for him!—My wife, who, since the death of *his*, has been as good as a mother to his minx of a girl!—And now, because a vulgar upstart from Manchester has bought his way into the neighbourhood, who can give him claret and pineapple instead of port and pippins, he turns his back upon his brother,—his *own* brother,—his only brother!—But the black coats are all alike,—as sneaking as rapacious!—I never saw the churchman who might not be bribed over by loaves and fishes.—The Deasmarsh cotton-

ner knew what he was about when he
e his first visit to the Rectory. Jacob
ld go through fire and water for one,
m, *otherwise*, he would have been glad to
hrown into them."

hat Mordaunt had paid his respects at the
ory before he paid them at the Hall was,
ct, the crowning offence to those offered
is bricklayers and drainers.

But my uncle assures me, dear papa,"
ded Magdalen, when this transpired in his
y, " that Mr. Mordaunt expressly stated
esire to call upon you, as a neighbour, as
as he was satisfied that you would not
der it a liberty, it being your place as
uperior to call first; whereas, he waited
y uncle simply as a parishioner."

Ay, ay!—It sounds plausible enough!"
all the anxious girl could obtain in re-
—" But, mark my words, Magdalen, that
b will live to be insulted by the purse-
d upstart, — who, sooner or later, will

prove a firebrand in this hitherto quiet d
trict."

No one better understood the duty of p
sive obedience than the daughter of M
Cromer. But, though she gave up the task
defending one who had committed no offen
she did not the less regret the loss of Des
marsh, both for her parents' sake and h
own.

"Let us say no more about the matter
said Mordaunt to the Rector, who was ende
vouring to make awkward excuses for t
churlishness of his brother.—"I must tru
to some of the chances of country neighbou
ship to establish me in Mr. Cromer's bette
opinion; till when, it may be as well th
the name of neither party be mentioned t
the other — the surest way of letting persona
grievances die a natural death."

This was somewhat difficult. For to th
schemes of village benevolence suggested b
the experience of the pastor, and prospere

he wealth of the manufacturer, the consent
ne Squire was often wanting.

Do what you choose,"—was his letter of
nse to his brother,—conscious in how
us a light he should place himself by op-
tion of such a nature,—"anything sooner
place me in contact with a man of whom
resolved to know nothing."

nd thus, however little Cromer Hall
nt benefit by the creation of the new seat,
village at least was the gainer; and throve
throve, and grew neater, and brighter,
wiser, and happier, albeit a blockhead
lord of the manor. The schoolhouses, to
ch he contributed nothing, were not the
frequented; and the cottage-gardens of
swold were as pleasant to look at, with
r flush of stocks and carnations, as if
bted to the Hall for the premiums securing
emulation.

ut it is not to be supposed that, because
Squire affected to see and hear nothing

that was going on, he was either blin
deaf to the growing influence of the Ma
Capital. If he did not see it, he inferr
by an inward pang of mortification whic
the sixth sense of the selfish. He felt
something great and good was abiding
him, which made his littleness appear n
little. His insignificance being every
demonstrated by the superiorities of D
marsh, he was forced to console himself
thanking Heaven, twenty times a day, f
thing wherein Heaven had little part—nam
the predominance of the Cromer achieveme
in the chancel of the old church, and
permanence of the Cromer records in
archives of the old deed-chest. But still,
torments of the envious Hamān were not
less his daily portion.

The especial favour of Heaven, inde
seemed to fall on the lands and havings of
rival. Abel's sacrifice was accepted. It mig
be, indeed, that the superior system of h

lry adopted by the man of the day, who not above learning from books all that is e gathered from the experience of others, the cause of his fuller crops and more ing plantations. But so it was that "the t inhabitant" of the parish could not mber having seen such harvests as covered eas of Mr. Mordaunt: while even the t inhabitants of the county were fain to t that no one who overlooked the green in of Deasmarsh would have suspected ecency of its creation. The belts were udiciously planted, — the traces of the es so completely obliterated, — the grass ell laid down,—the waters of the widened m so abounding !—

glance from those depths of verdure up parched and almost naked hill-side where ner Hall stood alone in its ugliness, like ntoward child in disgrace, or a leper- e of the olden time, was almost a suffi- excuse for the soured temper of its

proprietor, and the uncharitableness of his feelings towards the Mordaunts.

The lapse of two whole years served indeed rather to aggravate than soften his antipathies; nay, nothing but the unconquerable good-humour of Jacob Cromer prevented the Rectory from being included in the interdict laid upon Deasmarsh. For when the master of a family evinces a disposition to be at variance with one of his neighbours, active hands bearing pickaxes and spades are never wanting to assist in widening the breach; and not a week of the hundred and four which had elapsed since Mordaunt took possession of his place, but was embittered by some imaginary trespass, reported as committed by his people or the people of the railroad. The Squire's cottagers were not slow in discovering that, let them remove what hedge-stakes or open what water-sluices they might, so long as they contrived to make it appear that the aggression came from Deasmarsh, they were safe

molestation; and Joe Wilkes, a cun-
old bailiff, who had been picking a
ty livelihood for the last thirty years
ıal-administration of the meagre Cromer
erty, found that his gains were doubled
ctively administering to the enmities of
naster.

any a time did he delude the poor Squire
keeping watch with him through the
t, for poachers whose depredations he
ared to be committed in concert with
ay guards, by whom the game was for-
led to town, or sold to the housekeeper
easmarsh,—Mr. Mordaunt, with so limited
roperty in the county, and a lord of the
or so unpropitious, making no attempt to
erve his game.

ut the vigils of the malicious pair were
ıctuous. All that the Squire ever caught,
a severe cold. Deasmarsh was not to
ound tripping. It bestowed its blankets
chaldrons of coals on the poor of the

parish. It paid a neighbouring apothecary for administering to their ailments. It progressed in the sight of God and man; but without making itself amenable to the law by infringement of the smallest statute enforceable by Cromer of Cromer Hall.

Magdalen, meanwhile, consoled herself for her loss in the society of a family so worthy as the Mordaunts, by noting the delicacy of feeling with which Emma, in her rapid progress towards womanhood, abstained from profiting as fully she might have done by the general invitation of their new neighbour, lest her cousin should feel neglected.

"Don't praise me, Madge," cried she, when warmly thanked for her thoughtfulness,—"or you will place me under the necessity of sparing my own blushes by more frequent visits to Deasmarsh. I assure you I go there whenever my interests require it:—that is, whenever an importation of new books and music from town, or some rare flower in bloom

he conservatory, tempts me to overcome
dleness."

Don't talk so!—You know that *such* con-
ations never yet influenced either you or
uncle," said Miss Cromer, with a gentle
e of the head.

What other attraction do you think likely
raw me to Deasmarsh? Mrs. Mordaunt
sy, as in foundership of a family bound,
oving her acquaintance with the great
le of the county; Matilda remains the
silent repellant personage I first thought
and the handsome son is Heaven knows
re,—touring and making believe to improve
elf, in foreign parts. Till *his* arrival,
efore, I make small proof of self-denial in
living at Deasmarsh all the days of the
on which the Mordaunts profess a kind
e to make me welcome."

I shall not be the less pleased," rejoined
cousin, " when my sisters are settled at
e, to release you from the generous self-

sacrifice to which you condemn yourself
the sake of securing me a companion."

But, alas! for Magdalen, the event to wh
she thus alluded was fated not to be. W
the affectionate eldest sister was exercis
her skill and industry, and exhausting
girlish funds to adorn the rooms adjoin
her own, destined for the use of the two gi
the health of Emily, the second sister, seriou
impaired by an attack of scarlet fever fr
which both had suffered, gave indications
rapid decline. Instead of returning home
the enjoyment of the family union so lo
looked forward to, the Squire was appriz
by a letter from an eminent London physici
that the removal of his family to a southe
climate afforded the sole chance of preservi
her life.

To Clifton, accordingly, the Cromers r
paired for the winter; but only to see th
invalid sink into an untimely grave. No
even when her sufferings were terminated b

, were the cares of the family at an end: alen being the first to observe that her ing sister, either infected by close at- nce on the sufferer, or from bearing in onstitution the germ of the same insi- disease, was languishing even unto . The close confinement of a too la- ns education had destroyed those ill- country girls! Scarcely was the spring ning to be green, which, in their cheer- London imprisonment, they had so often ned of enjoying together at Deaswold their dear Magdalen, when poor Mary laid beside her sister, in a spot which witnessed the premature blighting of so delicate blossoms.—

eir uncle Jacob, when summoned from to solemnize the last rite over the ins of his nieces, pleaded strongly, that might be conveyed back to their old e, to rest amid kindred dust. But his her would not hear of it. The Squire

pronounced it to be a useless waste
money.

"Their winter at Clifton," he said, "h
already cost him an enormous sum."

The Rector could not bring himself to
mind this sordid parent that an undertake
bill was the last charge he would ever inc
on their account!—He contented hims
while mingling his tears over poor Mar
remains with those of the surviving ni
who felt it so hard to leave them desert
among strangers;—rendering thanks to G
in the silence of his heart, for having te
pered the wind to his own shorn lamb—
child in whom his soul delighted.

The idea of what it would have been
him to consign the remains of his darli
Emma to an untimely grave, seemed to
prize him, as by sudden discovery, of her
in-all importance to his happiness!—

CHAPTER IV.

. I pray thee, Rosalind, sweet my coz, be merry.
s. Dear Celia, I show more mirth than I am mistress
ut I will forget the condition of my estate, to rejoice
s.

SHAKSPEARE.

ough, during the absence of the Cromer
y from the Hall, a constant correspon-
was kept up between Magdalen and her
n,—the deference of feeling experienced
mma towards the feelings of one who
atching over the death-bed of a sister,
nted her alluding to the lighter topics
ying her attention.

en after their return to Northampton-
the deep mourning worn by Magdalen,
he pious abstraction into which her mind
allen after witnessing scenes so affecting,

prevented her cousin from endeavouring t
wean her from her griefs.

Of Deasmarsh, she said nothing; and Mag
dalen inquired as little. The great ga
created in her narrow domestic circle by h
recent loss, occupied Miss Cromer's who
attention. The closed-up rooms of po
Emily and Mary prevented her listening wi
undivided attention even to her cousin's a
count of the health of her rustic protégé
and the new spinning-school instituted und
the auspices of Mrs. Mordaunt.

As yet, indeed, Magdalen had not dared
enter the village of Deaswold. She knew
experience the lack of delicacy with whi
the poor demonstrate their sympathy
straightforward questions; and could n
bear to be subjected to inquiries concerni
the sufferings and last moments of the po
girls. She was consequently still ignora
that the Mordaunts had acquired in t
county a far higher degree of personal co

eration than was conceded to the shallow tility and penurious hospitality of the ll. In any county, in every metropolis, a n of ten thousand a year, unblemished cha- ter, and intelligent mind, works his way to olic respect.—But when, as in the instance Mr. Mordaunt, a pleasant, gentlemanly com- nion as well as a benevolent Christian ose good-Samaritanism has been ripened o the fullest expansion by the sunshine his lot, room is readily made for him in a untry neighbourhood, where he constitutes second providence.

All and more than all that the Squire had edicted, in short, was come to pass.—The lage saw pretty clearly that Cromer of omer Hall was no longer its top-sawyer; ile under the hospitable roof of Deasmarsh ere assembled a higher order of the estated gnats of Northamptonshire than had been nciliated into acquaintanceship by the ill- npered pride and shabby ways of the Squire.

By degrees, as Magdalen grew a little m cheerful, all this became as apparent to as to her cousin. She learned from Em that Lord and Lady Melfont and their had spent several days at Deasmarsh, in course of the winter; and then and there Rector and his daughter had become quainted with the family of Sir Will Settringham, to whom they had since b on a visit at Settringham Abbey, to meet Mordaunts and the Lord-Lieutenant of county.

"There were charades and proverbs go on every evening at the Abbey, in wh had I been in better spirits, I should h joined," observed Emma; "for Mr. S tringham and his mother obtained leave f papa!"

"And was it as pleasant at the Abbey at Deasmarsh?"—inquired Magdalen, un ling that her little cousin should fancy wholly indifferent to her pleasures.

Oh! *nothing*, you know, can be as plea-
as Deasmarsh, — nothing, *nothing* so
sant as Deasmarsh!"—cried the enthu-
ic girl. "At Deasmarsh, every thing is
resh,—so new,—so good,—so well se-
d!"—

was not for Magdalen to hint that, in the
of many, such freshness and newness
tituted an objection.

Settringham is a venerable place!" was
Miss Cromer ventured to observe. "I saw
t once, in a formal morning visit. But
ine old gateway and its ivy made a strong
ession."

In *my* opinion, dilapidated gateways and
bushes are better for owls than human
tures;" replied Emma, discerning at once
slur cast by inference upon her favourite
.—"I found nearly the same persons col-
d at Settringham as at Deasmarsh,—and
imes as much effort was made to enter-
them;—yet everybody admitted the Mor-

daunts' party to have been far more ag
able."

"My uncle speaks of Mr. Settringham
young man of extraordinary promise!"
Magdalen in an apologetic tone.

"Yes,—I believe he is wonderfully cle
But such a prig,—such a pedant,—suc
bore!—Reresby Mordaunt declares that
Settringham always appears to be revie
what one says, as he would review a boo
the Quarterly."

"Mr. Mordaunt is come home, then?"

"Reresby?—Oh! he arrived before
left the country."

"Indeed?—Unless from *you*, we n
hear what goes on at Deasmarsh.—And
you find him as much of an acquisitio
you expected?"—inquired Magdalen, wi
melancholy smile,—as she recalled to
the contention predicted by Emma with
three cousins, for the preference of the cot
spinner's heir.

The most amusing companion, the most
ging neighbour in the world!"—replied
na.—"Thanks to *him*, Magdalen, poor
e frightened foolish thing as you left me,
ave become a famous horsewoman. But
as been in town for the last month. As
as you came back, he went to London
the season."

Because we came back?"

To say the truth, partly.—I warned him
his sister that, for some weeks to come,
would see nothing of me;—that I should
always here, unless when I could induce
to come to the Rectory."

Which sufficed to keep *them* away!"

They were of course aware that you
ld be little inclined, just now, for the
pany of strangers."

You speak of 'they,' Emma, as though
s Mordaunt had turned out as charming
er brother?"—

Much more so! It was for Matilda's

sake, I first endeavoured to like Reresby—whose flighty ways, on our first acquaintance rather alarmed me."

"Then you no longer think her proud?"

"Hush, hush!—If you know how ashamed I feel that such a word should ever have escaped my lips!—"

"Now you have told me so, dearest cousin, depend upon it, I shall never remind you of your former opinion," replied Magdalen kindly.

"It was not an *opinion*, Madge; it was an ignorant girl's foolish mistake. I found Matilda silent and reserved, and hastily judged that she must be proud."

"And what *was* she then?"

"Shy! a fault we discover at once in children, yet never suspect in grown-up people, who are quite as liable to the failing. Matilda was afraid of me—yes,—absurd as it may seem, afraid of a little trumpery girl

fteen! The unkind things said in all
tions by my uncle about manufacturers
cotton-spinners were duly reported to
Mordaunts, the moment they arrived;
Matilda was prepared to find in every-
of the name of Cromer contempt,
r open or secret, of her and hers."
And of course you soon undeceived
,

Prejudices are not destroyed in a day.
thought the other proud; and, holding
as I did from the acquaintance, so long
ou were here, lest it should interfere,
st Madge, with our happiness in being
her, Matilda was justified in supposing
cold as I fancied herself. However, I
discovered that whatever her faults of
er, she was an excellent creature;—
ssing a thousand accomplishments of
she thought nothing: and doing good
morning till night, of which she chose
others should know nothing; and so, I

learned to admire and respect her. And, wh
Reresby came, and I saw her in the compa
of her brother, where she was perfectly
ease, I soon recanted my former errors."

"You learned to love each, in short,
the sake of the other?"

"Very nearly. At least, each served
interpreter to the other; and now, I perfec
understand them both."

Magdalen was unable to suppress a si
It seemed hard that the blessing of s
friendship should have fallen to the lot
Emma; who, though sisterless as the will
Providence had lately rendered herself, p
sessed in her father the warmest and tru
of friends. Whereas, the Squire and his w
lived on terms of such Darby-and-Joan
unanimity, as to create a barrier of reserve
tween themselves and their children.

Even the solace afforded to poor Magdal
by looking forward to the settlement at h
of her elder brother, when Robert proceede

ambridge for the completion of his edu-
tion, was extinguished shortly after the re-
tablishment of the family in Northampton-
ire.

With a family of five children, the Squire
d decided a college education, if indispen-
ble to the future incumbent of Deaswold,
be by no means wanting for the Squire
parent. But now that Magdalen alone
rvived of the three daughters for whom his
nurious economy had laid by a sum of
arly twenty thousand pounds, he began to
rceive the possibility of allowing the two
others to share at the university the same
vantages as at Rugby. For two or three
ars to come, therefore, Stephen would be
ly occasionally at home.

Unluckily, however, the diminution of the
aims both upon the personalty and income
the Squire, had other results besides pro-
ring a better education for his eldest son.
a moment of great enlargement of soul,

or great exacerbation of spite, he intimated an intention to repair and beautify the Hall! As though the loss of his two promising daughters were a relief, he hastily resolved to lay out a part of their portions in whitewash and red paint.—

All was to be restored in its glaring pristine ugliness; and when Magdalen suggested a timid inquiry whether, now that the workmen were on the premises, it would cost much more to have the new-pointing and picking out of the glowing façade converted into white stucco, so as to render the house a less staring object to the country round, Mr Cromer resented it as an insult. "Deasmarsh (which he concluded was the object of rivalship) was built of stone: *his* house, of humble brick,—and brick he chose it to remain. He did not wish to shine under false pretences. In *his* opinion, stucco was a contemptible subterfuge."

On the same ground, he refused to have hi

and dining-room painted to represent

The old panelling was deal,—mere deal, nd why should it affect to be anything by false colours?"

Rather than avail himself of the facilities he railroad, he even allowed a Northamp- paper-hanger to disfigure his walls by ers rejected as too gaudy even by the oad hotels; serving to render doubly arent the shabbiness of the old furniture ially and hideously renovated by the ap- ation of lacquered trophies and gaudy ldings; while the carpets, which he ntained to be beautiful by citing the unt of the country upholsterer's bills by m they were supplied, were precisely such re seen suspended from the window of e Kidderminster warehouse in High Hol- n.

I did not think (forgive me, dear papa) the old place *could* be made more ugly

was so unexpected as almost to neutraliz
their family affliction, could scarcely restrai
their feelings of triumph in contemplatin
the result; and the air of modest deprecatio
under which Mr. Cromer endeavoured to con
ceal his vain-gloriousness while pointing ou
from Basinghill, to his spinster neighbour
the Miss Moulseys, what Reresby Mordaun
took the liberty of describing "as that ver
alarming case of scarlet fever," added a new
trait of absurdity to his character.

"Laugh at the Hall,—laugh at the place
—laugh at its practices; laugh even (if you
laugh in your sleeve) at my uncle and aunt,"
said Emma, in reply to the quizzing of her
travelled friend; "for I am not afraid that
your sarcasm should extend to the parsonage
or parson; both being too simple, genuine, and
unpretending, to provoke the scorn of even
the most wanton jester. But not a word, if
you please, Mr. Mordaunt, against Magdalen,
—not a single word against Magdalen!—

, because I love her as myself: secondly,
use if you *could* find in her anything to
vere upon, I should have no further hope
emency."

And why not extend your prohibitions to
ister?" inquired young Mordaunt, who
red the affectionate nature of Emma as
as her glossy curls and hazel eyes.

Because Matilda laughs at nobody. Ma-
is as full of mercy as of justice!" said
a, turning towards Miss Mordaunt. "Shall
r forget her tender-heartedness during the
s of my poor cousins, whom she had never
and whose parents have shown them-
s so ungracious, only because she saw
nhappy!"

I don't wonder!" rejoined Reresby.
ars in such eyes as yours appear unna-
. Beings of *your* kind are created to
and dispense nothing but happiness."

onsidering the tone and look with which
entiment was uttered, it was scarcely to

be wondered at that his sister should con
it prudent to adhere closely to the side o
young couple during the remainder of
saunter through the beautiful coppice
Deasmarsh. For though her father's pro
and ambitions for the settlement in life o
son had never been expressly confided to
enough had transpired concerning them in
presence previous to her brother's return
the Mediterranean, to convince her that,
ever great the respect of Mr. and Mrs.
daunt for the Rector of Deaswold, it was
their intention to encourage an attachm
between his daughter and their son.

On the contrary, when describing
Reresby the offences to which he had b
subjected by the lord of the manor, Mr. M
daunt observed, with a smile—"He ha
handsome daughter, they tell me, with wh
you must not take it into your head to fal
love. For, even if I had not other views,
dear Reresby, for your establishment

e, no earthly consideration would induce
e to sanction the intermarriage of one of
y children with one of the Cromers."

CHAPTER V.

He speaks! The lake in front becomes a lawn;
Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise;
And streams, as if created for his use,
Pursue the track of his directing wand,
Sinuous or straight—now rapid and now slow,
Now murmuring soft—now roaring in cascades,
Even as he bids.

COWPER.

It is one of the cant sayings of England where the success of commercial enterpris has created family seats such as, in forme centuries, owed their origin to the stron arm of the warrior or cunning spoliation o the courtier—that such and such a place i "a fine place enough, but horribly *new*! As if, apart from historical association, ther existed charms in a weather-stained wall, o

irregularities of a structure the bar-
ous growth of succeeding ages.

'ew people, however, who have abided in
an establishment as that of Deasmarsh,
courage to repeat the charge. The most
s-grown of venerable castles can ill com-
with a mansion whose ease and comfort
erfected by the means and appliances of
ern science; where nothing old is to
net with but the pictures on the wall, the
s in the cellar, and the friends collected
njoy them.

was this that constituted the charm of
Mordaunt's household. All was smooth
l without let or hindrance. Everything
constructed on the best principles. The
lows opened wider and shut closer than
other windows in the county. The
ntest touch of a bell brought precisely the
ant that was wanted. All was according
he enactments of this age of progress.
was "on an improved principle." And if

the Slaves of the Lamp had known what t
were about, *such* arrangements would h
imparted greater charm to Aladdin's ma
palace than windows of ruby or doors
topaz: Personal comfort, to the worshi
which the selfishness of our century is d
cated, coming nearer home to the requirem
of human nature than magnificence.

That the system worked well at Deasm
was demonstrated in the good humour of
inmates. The Mordaunts were really ha
people, because they could have been so w
out all these accessories; and were, never
less, wise enough to know themselves hap
with. Through life, everything had prosp
with them; but prosperity had not
dened their hearts. They were too consc
of the happiness they derived from the b
ficence of Providence not to understand
duty of dispensing to others a portion of t
contentment.

The only fault of Mr. Mordaunt was t

ated by his own strength of mind and
ess of purpose, he could never be made
ceive an obstacle to plans sagely con-
and deliberately matured; and, if his
nd prudent mate were disposed to make
r allowance for the alloy of this world's
ess in the conduct of other people, it
ecause the tenderness of the mother had
hat mollified the rigid justice of the

on't suppose that because, to complete
by's education according to the modern
n of things, I have given him the run of
orld since he left college, I mean to
e him from bit and bridle, and let him
life of idleness," was the observation of
aster of Deasmarsh to Mrs. Mordaunt,
y before the return from the continent
son. "No, no!—I worked my own
hrough the early part of life, and he
work also;—not as *I* did, and not as
will do, for sordid gain. Reresby's

labours will be of a more satisfactory n
I mean to place him in parliament. Th
count they gave me of him at Camb
when I visited Trinity to enter his br
determined me to renounce the plans
previously formed on my own accoun
was, in fact, rather late for *me* to com
my apprenticeship in public life; but I
reasons to hope that the country will ha
him a servant still more efficient and eq
devoted. I flatter myself my utmost
tion will be gratified in the person o
son."

His wife made no reply. She was not
of the word "ambition." She had see
tranquillity of more than one happy fa
wrecked by restless cravings after distinc

"You look as if you were a little d
pointed, my dear old woman, at my ha
determined to do my duty to the countr
proxy!"—persisted Mr. Mordaunt, misi
preting her silence.

No, indeed," she replied. "Parliament
ld have carried us, I conclude, to town;
nothing tempts me less than a London
I was wondering only whether Reresby
ld not be a happier—perhaps a more use-
nan,—by exercising his abilities in some
bler sphere."

Why, what other sphere of usefulness
ld you assign to a young man who has
housand a year keeping warm for him?"

For the many years to come which I
will be occupied in the operation," said
Mordaunt, with a smile, "I would have
improve his mind and steady his character
study and observation; and devote his
re to promoting the happiness of a family
s own. I trust he will marry during our
ime."

Not more than I do. But I have a notion
he will make none the worse match for
ing M.P. after his name!"—

But surely not the happier?"

"Yes, the happier—or I never would
pledged my word to the match."

"Pledged your word?" exclaimed his
nished wife.

"Now I have let so much escape me,
dear, perhaps I had better say more.
having always observed that talking a
matrimonial engagements beforehand is
to put a spoke in the wheel, I made Fres
promise me to keep *his* wife out of the se
and was, of course, forced to make a cou
promise to the same effect."

"Freshley?"—reiterated Mrs. Morda
in a tone of dismay, the name of her
band's former partner affording a most
satisfactory clue to the mystery.

"The proposal was of his own maki
replied her husband.—"Some years ago, w
I first intimated my intention of retiring
the firm as soon as I could dispose of
share, Freshley, who, I really believe, l
me like a brother, afforded proof of his re

the dissolution of our connexion, by de-
ring that if, at five-and-twenty, Reresby
ould be disposed to marry his niece, and
audia have grown up to our liking, he
uld give her a hundred thousand pounds
wer, and at his death the whole of his for-
e and the whole of the business."—

'But with Reresby's prospects, it is not
ney he wants. And Claudia Freshley
ld *never* grow up to our liking!"—

'In yours and Matilda's society, she would
prove. And Freshley's fortune, including
business, cannot be estimated at less than
r hundred thousand pounds."

'A noble prospect, certainly; but surely
less consequence to *us* than other people?
th only Reresby and your daughter to
nk of (for Tom is nobly provided for by
share of the business awaiting him), is it
cessary to sacrifice the happiness of our
mising son?"

"Sacrifice it? — God forbid! — But in the

event of our changing our mind, ther
always the saving clause of Claudia's grov
up to our liking."

"Surely it is Reresby's liking that ou
rather to be consulted?"—

"His preferences have hitherto been
own."—

"Because they were those of a boy.
now that he has seen more of the world
world to *us* unknown—he may acquire o
tastes—the tastes of the day—the taste
the young—"

"I hope you don't mean, my dear,
you think him likely to turn out a fash
hunter?"—

"I might reiterate your exclamation,
say, 'God forbid!' But I do *not* think
On the contrary, I believe him to be actu
in his loves and likings only by the
motives and purest taste."

"Well, well," interrupted Mr. Mordaun
little more imperiously than was his w

not go in search of obstacles to a plan
h I confess occupies no small share of
thoughts. As a practical man, I know
value of four hundred thousand pounds.
the hundred thousand to be laid down
Freshley as a marriage portion contains
germ of worlds of enjoyment—ay, and
ever you may think of it,—worlds of
e! The few good deeds which you some-
s make it your pride to lay to my ac-
t, I should never have been able to achieve,
lear wife, without the command of ready
ey, that fostered my good intent. I would
see my son enjoy the same opportuni-
"—

I am convinced he would be equally
apt to improve them."

The more reason, my dear, for not raising
ctions to poor little Claudia Freshley!—
I ask of you, therefore, is to say not a
able on the subject to Reresby. We have
ly two years before us. Time enough to

apprize him of our project when satisfied th
the girl has turned out what we could wi
in a daughter-in-law. He is to spend t
autumn quietly at Deasmarsh, enlivened
visits to such of his friends as have sporting
his disposal; and before the meeting of pa
liament, will be returned for Castle Danga
which I have snug in my pocket. If I kno
any thing of his character, he will soon
engrossed by aims of too important a natu
not to rejoice at having the trouble of a lon
courtship taken off his hands; more especiall
when he finds a capital establishment and
pretty little wife provided for him, with no
thing to do but to hang his hat up in th
hall."—

Fathers seldom *do* know any thing of th
character of their sons; or they would not s
often propose measures likely to drive them
into rebellion. Many was the time tha
Reresby had been punished in earlier life fo
his boyish mimicry of the vulgarity of old

hley and his family;—worthy, well-inten-
d people—of a decidedly inferior order
ne Mordaunts, and indebted for their
sion of wealth solely to the intelligence
ind of their former partner.

t, even had it been otherwise, Reresby was
o independent a turn of mind to have his
nies pre-arranged, even by his father. If
ile in his tastes, in his opinions he was
decided and obstinate; and to his mother
his was so clearly apparent that, bound
er promise to let the Freshley affair take
ourse without warning to her son, the
e and joy with which she welcomed him
easmarsh,—to the beautiful seat which
ndustry and judgment of his father had
ed on a par with the first in the county,—
e somewhat deteriorated by anxiety to
trate the secrets of his young heart.

ne was terrified lest, in the far lands where-
r two years past he had been wandering,
ight have formed some attachment likely

to interfere with his father's expecta
For, eager as she was for Reresby's h
ness, she was scarcely less desirous tha
husband should not be thwarted; and h
with a woman's intuitive knowledge on
subjects, that the influence of some fair
or the charm of some graceful nature, s
suffice to introduce discord into a f
hitherto so united.

It was Spring when he arrived; the p
of the year when every day affords to
landscape the same beautiful changes of
and expression as to the face of a y
beauty. Never had Deasmarsh looked
enchanting. The American plants of
home-shrubbery presented their richest m
of bloom; while the fine conservatory
joining the house afforded to the eye o
fastidious traveller a display of highly c
vated tropical plants, such as, in their n
clime, he had rarely seen attain similar
fection.

Lucky that my father sent me abroad
e he was finishing Deasmarsh!" cried
sby, having luxuriated for a few days in
eauties and comforts of the place; "for,
seeing it in its present perfect state,
ould have been indeed difficult to tear
lf away. Under my tent among the
weens, or the arcades of the Alcazar, I
ld have languished after these pleasant
es."

rs. Mordaunt was not sorry that the ab-
e of the family from Cromer Hall should
ve, just then, the only draw back upon the
antness of their neighbourhood. The
or and his little daughter frequently
ened their domestic circle. But even
, the death of the poor girls having called
the former, the kind-hearted mistress of
marsh insisted on having Emma for an
te during his absence, she felt no hesi-
n on her son's account. Her handsome
sby, who had been taking part in the

court festivities of Naples and Madrid, Vie
and Paris, and who, she could perceive
words he occasionally let fall, had not pas
unnoticed in those brilliant crowds, was in
great danger from the pretty face of the
unformed country girl that fell in his wa
more particularly as the predominant charm
Emma Cromer, her childish buoyancy of spi
was, for the moment, in eclipse. Parted fo
first time in her life from her father, she
often in tears: the untimely fate of her
playmates and the bereavement of poor M
dalen exciting her utmost sympathy. To di
the attention of his mother's guest from t
afflicting considerations, Reresby entered m
minutely than he had ever purposed into
strange eventful history of his travels.

"I know I am a bore. All travellers
bores when they prose about what they
seen and apologize for what they have
seen," said he one morning, while loun
qeside the work-table of his sister and

friend, in the rotunda surrounded by a
of Indian chintz that terminated the
rvatory, looking through the cool waters
fountain whose crystal springlets leaped
he air from a marble basin in the centre,
vista of the rarest and most beautiful
rs, into the morning room where Mrs.
aunt was composedly seated at her desk.
t you must bear with me, young ladies,
I have fallen into a narrative vein, lest,
ant of an audience, I should be beguiled,
r or later, into the weakness of print.
nsider into what inventions I might b
yed by the lying vocation of authorship,
der to fill out the flanks of my lean and
ry volumes!"—
nd it was certainly no disagreeable addi-
to the interest excited by his narrative
ne mind of his grave sister, to watch the
ing expression they served to call up in
mutable countenance of one whom, as
grew more familiar, the young traveller,

who was recounting his hair-breadth 'sc
permitted himself to call his "deli
Desdemona."

For Emma was not only impressionabl
an intelligent child, but comparatively
ignorant as to be enthralled by descrip
familiar to Miss Mordaunt through the p
of modern tourists. The Desert was ne
her; or rather a name—a scriptural n
which she seemed almost afraid to tak
vain; and, when Reresby proceeded to
scribe the frightful scenes he had witnesse
the plague-stricken city of Cairo, where
friend and fellow-traveller Sir Herbert Gl
had all but fallen a victim to that ter
scourge, so deathly pale grew the face of
pretty little auditress, and so cold and tr
lous was the hand she laid upon Mati
arm, beseeching her to bespeak the forb
ance of her brother, that Reresby was fai
dash into an *olla podrida* of his adventur
Seville; mingling together in brilliant

on, bull-fights, serenades, seguedillas, fan-
goes, Murillo's pictures, Montes's exploits,
ices of geraniums, and groves of orange-
s and pomegranates!—

oor Emma's often repeated exclamation of
w she should like to have been with him,
lst such stirring scenes and spectacles!"
of course parried by his rejoinder, that
that case he should have lost the pleasure
ecounting them to her;" and Miss Mor-
it, dearly as she loved the affectionate
who clung so confidingly to their friend-
, could not help sometimes wondering at
brother's patience in taking such pains to
rtain one whose simple mind might have
diverted at easier cost.

t seemed like squandering the rich stores
is intelligence,—Oriental pearls of poetry,
the solid gold of still more valuable
rmation, to place them, like bits of worth-
glass in a kaleidoscope, for the sport
moping child.

"She is *so* pretty!" was Reresby's
joinder, when, one day, his sister rallied h
on having given up a fishing party, at S
tringham Abbey, for the pleasure of idli
about the grounds at Deasmarsh, with Em
and herself. "In these days of artifice a
over-education, it is something, let me
you, to meet with a person so unsophi
cated. I don't believe Tommy Moore fo
any thing purer or fairer than Emma, w
he went angel-hunting under the shade
the sumachs, among the woodpeckers of
backwoods."

Of Tommy Moore's angel-hunts Miss M
daunt knew nothing. But she ventured
suggest to her brother that his admirat
of this "unsophisticated person" might
sibly ripen into a feeling somewhat m
dangerous.

"Why *dangerous*, Matty?" said he. "
father, so indulgent to his children, and
warm an advocate of human independe

certainly allow us to exercise a choice
o grave a matter as marriage?"
latilda was silent.—
Will you be pleased to open those pretty
of yours," cried her brother, "which
e so voluble, unasked, just now?"—
Better not!" replied Miss Mordaunt;
r we shall certainly not agree."—
I do not want you to agree with me. I
t you to tell me on what ground my
er could object to an alliance with the
ners?"
Is it not equally possible that the
ners might object to intermarry wit
family?"—
Pho, pho, child! — You are in your
ge before you come to years of discre-
.—People of six times their consequence
ld jump at an alliance with Deasmarsh
ten thousand a-year!"—
People of six times their consequence
afford to overlook deficiencies insuperable

to *them*.—When George Melfont propose
me this winter, Lord and Lady Melfont
all that depended upon *them* to forward
views of their son. But I should be s
that my happiness depended on obtaining
consent of the family at Cromer Hall to
marriage with one of *theirs*."

"Are you in earnest, Matilda?" c
Reresby Mordaunt, whose notions of n
descent, being somewhat elevated by long
journ in Austria and Spain, among the
dewed palaces of Venice, and ancient cas
of Romagna, he could not persuade him
to look with much deference upon obs
esquiredom.—"Do you really mean that
this century of railroads and patent m
cines, your Northamptonshire Squire
sumes upon a descent unillustrated by
torical distinction or a single chival
association, to fancy himself somebody
Do these Cromers (fatteners of beeves
brewers of strong drink, from generation

neration,) fancy themselves superior to a
ce, their equals in education, which has
ced itself, by its own efforts, almost on a
el with the aristocracy?"—

'Unquestionably!—And, as society is con-
uted, my dear brother, I fancy such would
the general verdict."—

'You believe, in short, that a nobleman,
e Lord Melfont, would be better pleased to
nect himself with the Cromer family than
s?"—

'Far better!"—

For some minutes, Reresby Mordaunt
intained the silence of which, shortly be-
e, he had accused his sister. He was evi-
tly chewing the cud of sweet and bitter
cies.

'During my wanderings in the East,"
l he, at last, addressing Matilda, but in so
a voice that he seemed to be thinking
ud, "where one cannot help reverting to
nitive times, and lamenting the lapse into

barbarism of the countries consecrated to o
veneration by the rise of Christianity,
often humiliated me to reflect on the lit
progress the world has made, during the t
thousand years which ought to have suffic
to civilize mankind; and on the vast p
tions of the earth's surface, where laws
vile and practices as savage still prevail
during the mission of the Apostles.—I
hang me if I ever dreamed, dearest Mat
that, in the heart of a polished country li
England, such uncharitable narrowness
mind as you describe was still to
found!"—

Miss Mordaunt could scarcely refrain fr
smiling at the semi-serious earnestness of
apostrophe.

"Admit, however, that it is as well y
should be forewarned, before the return
the family to Cromer Hall," said she, "th
though the good Rector, as becomes the
ligion he teaches, goes hand in hand with

her, and perfectly understands his value
l importance in the country, to the head
the family, Mordaunt of Deasmarsh is
l only Mordaunt the cotton-spinner!"
"Hush, hush!" cried Reresby, pointing
Emma and her father, who, having just
ered Mrs. Mordaunt's sitting-room, were
gaged in friendly greetings;—"for *their*
es, do not force me to tax, as it deserves,
h confoundedly vulgar impertinence!—
en little Emma would never speak to me
in, were I to give her my real opinion
the Lilliputian consequence of Cromer of
mer Hall!"—

CHAPTER VI.

If the equipage of those who ascend into honour
figure, from the successful trade of their ancestors, co
bear note of the fact, it would quicken industry in the p
suit of such acquisitions, and discountenance luxury in
enjoyment of them.

SIR RICHARD STEELE

There appeared some risk that Matild
warning might have the effect usual in su
cases, of imparting undue interest to t
prohibited object; for, in the course of t
following fortnight, the increasing familiar
of the traveller with Emma, the hea
laughs they enjoyed together, and the nu
ber of times that, when Reresby was missi
at Deasmarsh, he was found to have spe
the morning at the Rectory, served to i
crease the uneasiness of his sister.

May, however, had scarcely sprinkled t
hawthorn hedges of Deaswold with its snow

ossoms, when the unexpected arrival, in
ngland, of Sir Herbert Glynne, the college
end with whom he had visited the East
d parted at Damascus, overthrew, in a mo-
ent, his rural plans; and off he went, to
ss the remainder of the season in town,
thout further thought of Deaswold Rectory
his "delicate Desdemona."

"Safe for the present!"—was the secret
culation of his sister, whose satisfaction
Sir Herbert's return was not a little en-
nced by the new direction it afforded to
e thoughts of her brother. For she enter-
ned little fear but that, in the vortex of
ndon life, amid the interests of the punic
r of politics and the gay sparkling of the
teries, he would soon forget the pretty face
ich had derived its charm from the ab-
nce of higher attraction.

Nor were her anticipations at fault.—In
r Herbert Glynne's society, he soon at-
ined other ambitions. At Reresby's

age, impressions are readily taken. Afte
week's sojourn in town, he recollected N
thamptonshire only as the county contain
his happy home, and the rich acres bask
in the sunshine which he should some
call his own. His views had expanded,
focus of his destiny attained a wider
cumference.—A patient listener in the gall
of the House of Commons, his pulse be
to throb in unison with those of the nati
He came to care for the "ins" and "out
or, rather, for the probability that the "ou
would become "ins," *not* from a desire t
such or such a friend might be provid
for, but from the grave conviction that
change would operate forcibly on the p
sperity of the country. And if, amid
hurry of dinner-parties and crush of ope
and balls, the Rector's daughter ever
curred to his mind, it was merely as a pr
tling, inoffensive, little creature, who was
best listener in the world.—

The summer was over when he returned to
smarsh; and, surrounded by its stubble-
ds, it struck him, perhaps, as somewhat
of a terrestrial paradise than it had ap-
red, when viewed in immediate contrast
h the barn-like country-houses and wide
ows of the continent. The home enjoy-
nt to which he had looked forward with
greatest eagerness was his father's so-
y. He wanted to talk over with the
ndest head and warmest heart of his ac-
intance, the new interests he had heard
cussed,—the new policy he had seen ex-
nded.

"I can't understand, my dear father,"
l he, the first time they were alone to-
her, "how, with your powers of mind
stake in the country, you have had
rage to keep out of the House of Com-
ns!"

"Easily explained, my dear boy!" was
manufacturer's frank reply. "Till within

these few years, my time belonged to
business; and, on retiring from it, I fell
desperately in love with leisure to part
dily from my new charmer.—Nor, as Pa
ment has not room for a fifth part of t
as able and willing as myself to execute
business of the country, is there any neces
for self-sacrifice."

After such a preamble, it was indeed
tifying to expound to Reresby the arra
ments made in his favour.—

" *You*, however, my dear son," conti
he, " have not yet earned your right
lounge about under the shadow of your o
And in *your* case, Reresby, one of my
sonal objections to a parliamentary caree
obviated.—My fortune would not have
ported Deasmarsh, such as it has been
pride to make it, and a suitable establishi
in town. Whereas, *you* will live in chamb
in lodgings, or at an hotel; and, with
fifteen hundred a year I shall allow you,

lly support, as a bachelor, the honours of
our condition in life."

It was not the honours of his condition in
e, however, that dazzled the eyes of Reresby.
noble career was suddenly opened before
m. He was prepared to fulfil to the ut-
ost the projects of his father; and, for the
ke of their common credit, devote to the
udy of the laws of the country those idle
tumnal months predestined to the rod and
n, or, rather, to pheasants and the fox.

"Poor Emma!" sighed Matilda Mordaunt,
hen, by the earnestness with which her bro-
er was setting to work, she perceived how
uch she had in the first instance miscalcu-
ted his danger. "I fear she will fret sadly,
oor child, at finding herself thus completely
rgotten!"—

Great, however, was her relief when, a week
two after Reresby's arrival in the country,
mma, with her usual girlish frankness, apo-
gized for coming so rarely to Deasmarsh.

"You must tell your brother," said sh
"that it is not because I am less interest
than formerly in his amusing stories. But
give up all my time now to Magdalen.
cannot bear my poor cousin to be a mome
alone; and at present, alas! I fear there
little chance of overcoming the prejudices
my uncle and aunt, so as to effect an a
quaintance between the two families."

From any other human being, Miss Mo
daunt would have attributed this strange e
cuse to pique, engendered by the slights fr
which she was suffering. But nothing b
truth ever issued from the lips of Emma.

It might be, indeed, that Miss Mordau
was content to take things on their o
showing, from being a little flurried by t
approaching arrival of Reresby's Eastern f
low-traveller; who, when their guest in La
cashire, some years before, had left an impr
sion on her feelings which at one time s
believed, or fancied, or hoped, to be recip

l; and which the issue of their present eeting would bring to the test.

Her uncertainty concerning the sentiments Sir Herbert Glynne was, in fact, the origin the reserve of manner, at first so repellant Emma Cromer. A suspicion that he was terred from giving way to his preference by sinclination to unite his destinies with those a manufacturer's daughter, had chilled the arm expansion of her heart, until she became y, and apparently cold and ungracious.

It had occurred to her, indeed, that the aste with which Sir Herbert started on s travels was instigated by the desire of utting to the proof of absence an attach- ent thoughtlessly indulged during his college acations; and, from the time of his quitting ngland (an interval devoted by the Mor- aunt family to their establishment in their ew residence), Matilda had all but made up er mind that, on his return to England, he vould prudently allow the acquaintance to rop.

Very difficult had it been, in fact, eve
her self-governed nature, to abstain from
seemingly careless inquiries of her bro
as might set this point at rest. She s
times resolved, while conversing with Re
during his first visit to Deasmarsh, that
day should not expire without explicitly
termining whether she were forgotten b
Herbert, or whether they were likely to
him on the same familiar footing as of
But when on the point of giving utteranc
her anxieties, the words clave to her lips.
would be so terrible to learn that there
to be an end, an utter end, to her
dream! — Even her present spirit-breal
suspense was better than the certainty
the object of her choice was lost to her
ever and ever.—

One day, however, soon after Reres
return from town, as Mr. and Mrs. Mord
were planning a dinner party, to include
Melfonts and Settringhams, her brother

tioned that it might not take place till after ıe 10th of August, " because, *then*, Glynne ould be with them;" an announcement hich forced his sister to quit the room, lest should become as clear to others as to her-lf, that the intelligence thus unconcernedly nparted was to *her* a matter of life and death. He was coming, then;—and the girl, unable t sixteen to determine whether his atten-ons arose from the unmeaning gallantry of flighty, fashionable young man, fancied she ad attained, with her one-and-twentieth year, ufficient tact and discernment to ascertain ıe extent of his regard.—Though the interim ad been spent by Matilda in domestic se-lusion,

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,

nd that clash of interests and cunning hich imparts the vulgar science called know-dge of the world, she fancied that the book-arning to which she had been devoting her

leisure, and the *Selbständigkeit* acquired
solitary self-communing, would place her
a par with one who had been conning
great book of mankind in varied climes
countries ;—seeing the West deride the E
and the East, in its turn, contemn the igno
publicities of the West;—beholding Christi
wrangle for precedence within the precincts
the Holy Sepulchre of Mahomedanized Je
salem ;—and pagans and infidels, with cros
on their bosoms, cringing at the footstool
Christian kings; in short, all the contra
tions and hypocrisies of modern life, wh
" make the angels weep," and the nice
server laugh in his sleeve at the hollow sup
ficiality of the human kind.

There was one point, however, on wh
Matilda felt conscious of being weak as
weakest of her sex. The satisfaction w
which she learned that the Melfonts were
visit Deasmarsh during his stay,—the M
fonts who, in spite of a genealogy that reac

the crusades, had eagerly courted her for
eir son,—proved how real was her convic-
n that a sense of the inequality of their
ndition had kept the roving baronet aloof.
e was ashamed of herself for wishing that
should see that a coronet was an insufficient
nptation to the cotton-spinner's daughter;
t, in spite of her better reason, so it was.

But on the day of Sir Herbert's arrival at
asmarsh, the only addition to the family
rty consisted of the Rector and his daugh-
, who had prayed to be excused from the
lliant assemblage of the morrow; and Ma-
da's dread lest her flutter of spirits while
ceiving the homage of their guest should
come apparent to a mere child, like Emma,
ved sadly to increase the emotions she was
able to subdue.

Scarcely however were they seated at the
undant and well-served dinner-table, which
e tardy arrival of the London train rendered
arly the first scene of meeting between

those so long estranged, when Miss Morda
perceived that the attention of both Sir H
bert and her little friend, so far from be
directed to herself, was exclusively absor
by each other. The traveller was in the hi
est spirits;—perhaps forced,—perhaps aris
from the excitement of being again am
friends from whom he had been so long part
—for, under such circumstances, the emb
rassment of not exactly knowing whether
privileges of former intimacy will be accor
or withheld, is apt to take refuge in assu
vivacity.

"But surely the same thing, or someth
very much like it, occurred to Mr. Rere
Mordaunt?" observed Emma, at the clos
an excellent anecdote concerning Mehe
Ali, which Sir Herbert had been relating.

"To Reresby?—He never was within m
of the spot!" replied Sir Herbert, with
tended indignation. "If Reresby has b
pretending to strut in my borrowed plu

I denounce him as an impostor. I see how it is!" continued he: "the popularity he boasted to me of having acquired in Northamptonshire is, after all, the result of basely pilfering my commonplace-book, and establishing a reputation for heroism on the strength of my romantic exploits. Reresby!" cried he (as soon as his friend came to the close of the argument he was holding with the Rector—running down the bagged fox of the narrow gauge), "I have a great mind, sir, to sue you for damages!—I hear you have been pillaging my Oriental treasures; and can well imagine the wanton waste of good things that has ensued from your misappropriation."—

"On the contrary, my dear fellow, you ought to thank me," retorted his friend, "for bringing into use the costly materials you know not how to turn to account."—

"It is easy to charge people with incompetency!" rejoined Sir Herbert, with such

well-dissembled displeasure, that the simple-hearted Emma began to get a little nervous; "but who gave you permission, pray, to snip up my rich brocade into patchwork?—I vow to Heaven I suffer as much from seeing the Doric simplicity of a good story destroyed by a bungler, who makes neither head nor tail of it as a *chef d'œuvre* of the old masters re-touched and varnished by the hands of a picture-cleaner!"—

"You are an ungrateful fellow, Glynne," said his young friend in the same bantering tone. "Considering the sacrifice I made you of half my traveller's relics,—bricks from the tower of Babel, and a slip of palm from the tomb of Eve,—for the behoof of that insatiable rarity-monger Lady Madrepore (to whom or to whose conversazioni you were making such desperate love a few weeks ago), you need not grudge me a few flimsy adventures, which you have worn threadbare, and which no second-hand, second-rate tour-sho

n Paternoster Row would buy off your ands."

It was now Matilda's turn to redden; hough, had she taken courage to watch the ountenance of Sir Herbert, she could have iscerned that the allusion to Lady Madrepore rought no guilty flush to her sallow cheek.

"Reresby is a shabby fellow," he contented imself with retorting,—"to interfere with y coterie reputation. The only laurels that an ever fall to *my* lot, must be cultivated in he *jardinière* of a drawing-room. Whereas, e has Parliament before him, with as many arlands in embryo as would serve for a oman ovation or one of Lumley's ballets!— can assure you, Miss Cromer, that, while iscussing the triangular morsel of the London eason to which he was pleased to help him- elf, the vaulting ambitions of the future enator were evident in every look and word. o balls,—no concerts,—no flirtations,—no un of any kind!—Reresby was as constant

to the House, as if already the legitima
prey of the whipper-in."

That he addressed these remarks to Em
instead of herself, with whom, albeit t
party was too small for anything but gene
conversation, it would have been more natu
that he should have talked than with a perf
stranger, was jealously attributed by M
Mordaunt to the air of intense interest w
which her young friend sat listening to
sallies, and to the charm imparted to
young face by its fluctuating bloom.

For how was she to surmise that the att
tions paid to Emma throughout the evening
Sir Herbert were the result of Reresby's hin
him in London, as an excuse for his avoida
of parties, that there was a little field-flo
blooming in his Northamptonshire meado
more lovely than the crown imperials
tiger lilies of the fashionable world; or t
the discriminating friend was naturally
sirous to satisfy himself concerning the me

one to whose hands he thought it far from possible the happiness of Reresby might at me future moment be confided.

Still less was she likely to conjecture that e undisguised interest with which Emma ntemplated Sir Herbert Glynne arose from xiety to ascertain whether *all* young men turning from an Oriental tour were equally scinating: or whether the feelings of admi-tion excited in her mind by Reresby Mor-aunt,—not as she now saw him, but as he as on his first arrival at Deasmarsh,—were eated by her own inexperience rather than y the measure of his deserts.

CHAPTER VII.

I am joined with no foot land-rakers,—no long-st
penny strikers, nor any of the mad mustachio purpl
maltworms. But with nobility and tranquillity;
masters and great oneyers.

SHAKSPE

Like Pentheus when, distracted by his fear,
He saw two suns and double Thebes appear.

DRY

If the cracks and flaws of human natu
ever entitled to indulgence, Miss Mor
might surely be pardoned her mome
regret at the too implicit obedience of
Melfont's son and heir to her request th
would forget having ever asked her ha
marriage, in order that the intimacy o
families, as country neighbours, might
no interruption.

For, though Sir Herbert Glynne had

casion to witness the friendly deference testi-
d by the whole Melfont family towards her,
e coldness of George Melfont's deportment;
nen constrained by order of precedence to
ke his place by her side, was little indica-
ve of passionate attachment. Seated be-
een him and the prosy pedantic Mr. Settring-
m, Matilda was seen to the greatest disadvan-
ge; and the appearance of shy reserve which
d formerly so alarmed the susceptibility of
or Emma, entitled Sir Herbert, who was sta-
oned opposite and frequently met her eye,
infer that he was himself the object of
r displeasure.

There was consequently every reason for
m to regret the absence of his more graci-
s auditress of the preceding day. When,
evade the encounter of Miss Mordaunt's
eezing looks, he endeavoured to enter into
nversation with Lady Melfont and Lady
ettringham, between whom he was placed,
saw clearly that he was set down as a

Munchausen by the two country ladies, f
merely venturing to allude to his recent vis
to Jericho beyond Jordan, and having broug
down his lion among the highlands
Ethiopia.—And a poor alternative was it
listen in his turn to the discussion betwe
their husbands and Reresby, concerning
notice of action for trespass served by t
lord of the manor that morning on Mr. M
daunt; in which the latter had both la
equity, and usance on his side.

Miss Mordaunt, who noticed the air of
straction into which Sir Herbert had fallen
the close of the argument, would have gi
worlds to silence the puerile circumstantial
with which Sir William Settringham k
enlarging on the numerous previous offen
against his host committed by their nei
bour at Cromer Hall. While her father,
high-minded to be in the smallest degree
fected by the Squire's assumption of su
riority, listened with more amusement t

chagrin to a summing-up of the insults to which he had been exposed, Matilda, shrinking with the thin-skinned sensibility of youth from any thing like disparagement or contumely, could not bear to find her family placed before the eyes of the man she loved in a light so ignominious. For the first time that she could remember, it was a relief when Lady Melfont, in compliment to the young baronet who wore the "complement extern" of a man of wit and pleasure about town, began to talk of London.

How little analogy there existed between men of wit and pleasure about town,—had Sir Herbert possessed any pretension to the character,—and a family of Lord Melfont's class, which enjoyed its country serenity with as harmless a beatitude in its old-fashioned house in Queen Anne Street as in the midst of its Northamptonshire Park, was not apparent to Matilda. Of the wide gulf existing between their inoffensive respectability and

the flash fashionability of May Fair, she k
nothing. Conceiving the Melfonts to
cupy in London the same pre-eminent
tion they commanded in a straggling cou
neighbourhood,—she could scarcely acc
to herself for an outrage of candour so
worthy the honest-hearted Lady Melfont
her observation—"*We* live so out of
world, that I know little of what goes
But I am assured that last season was
sidered an unusually brilliant one."

"Shall I never steer clear of that hat
word 'season!'" thought Sir Herbert, who
flattered himself that, in the homely housel
of Mordaunt the cotton-spinner, he was
cure against all shallow pretence to fash
But the age and grave aspect of Lady Mel
demanded more courtesy in reply.

"I am a bad person to refer to ab
London or its pleasures," said he. "Hav
been three years absent from England, I h
completely broken, thank Heaven, th

len chains of bondage which render man St. James's Street as complete a slave nan under the thraldom of the Bey of is. As such ties do not, like a frac-d bone, naturally reknit themselves, I e particular care to preserve my freedom remaining a boor."

Vithout exactly understanding him, Lady lfont ventured to remark that " a London was indeed sad slavery; and that, as soon the Birthday and the Ancient Concerts e over, she and Lord Melfont were quite d to leave town. Her son being neither Parliament nor a dancing man "— (the al-native raised a smile on the lips of Sir rbert)—" they were under no necessity to our through the last stage of the season." " Unless the human race can be strength-ed and magnified by the progress of modern ence," observed Sir Herbert,—(perhaps by y of pretext for his smile,)—" and prize n and women grown like prize geraniums,

—I beg their pardon — pelargoniun
know not how our grandsons are to re
increasing stress upon the human energ
Within the last half century, the West
London is nearly doubled in extent. Yet
are expected to get through the same n
of engagements per day, extending from
land Place to Hyde Park Gardens, an
grave Square, as when the two latter
rural retreats in the neighbourhood
metropolis, where gentlemen went to
each other in duels, or dowagers assassi
each other in rival breakfasts."

"Quite true!"—interposed Lord Me
who had figured in his youth at the *déje*
costumés of Albinia Countess of Bucking
shire at her *rus in urbe*, among the gr
pits of Pimlico.

"When one reflects," gravely resume
Herbert, encouraged by having obtained
ear of the House, "on the agglomer
of works the present century has adde

amount of book-learning the last gene-
ion had to undergo, it seems impossible
t the same amount of faculties, which
ld hardly digest the earlier produce, should
ve equal to the task. New arts and
ences annually spring up, — a smattering
east of which is indispensable to all think-
people; and unless one were to pur-
se a patent caoutchouc memory, it will
n become impossible to remember even
new names supplied by modern discovery.
Physically or morally, we do not follow
roads laid down for the use of our
hers."

"At least you will admit," interposed
. Settringham, from the further end of the
le, (Lady Melfont, unaccustomed to be so
gwindedly addressed among her country-
ghbours, sitting silent and aghast,)—"at
st you will admit, my dear sir, that if
w labours and occasion for acquirement
ve been added to our earthly mission, much

of the business of life has been abridg
its tediousness? I, for instance, am a
perform in a few hours the journey from
tringham Abbey to town, which it too
father a couple of days to accomplish."

"And the consequence is," added Sir
bert, "that you perform it so much
frequently in the course of the year, tha
may set down quite as many days to t
ling out of every three hundred and sixt
as were sacrificed to the same end by
forefathers.—*Experientia docet.* Bor
fore the discovery of steam, I should u
tionably have satisfied my roving prope
by plodding in the steps of the great Jo
to the Hebrides, or, at the utmost, trip
those of Oliver Goldsmith on the ban
the 'lazy Scheld or wandering Po:'—
to the lakes, or the grand tour suffici
wear down my energies to the level of n
mestic fireside. But, as a citizen of the
when monthly Railway Guides announ

riodical sailing of steam-packets for New ork and Hong Kong,—the Red Sea and the ack,—the North Pole and the South,— could not of course content myself without ting my pillau at Ispahan and my canvas-ck duck on the Schuylkill, before I settled wn for life to my English turkey at Christ-as.—I have consequently devoted the same mber of years to my wanderings; and tra-lled some thousands of leagues more than birthright entitled."

"I fancy, Sir Herbert, you accompanied my iend Reresby as far as Damascus?"—ob-rved Mr. Settringham, who, as the best lker in the neighbourhood, was a little raid of being over-prosed.

"Our friend Reresby accompanied *me* as r as Damascus! But *I* went further and fared onsiderably worse. If the Overland mail had ot charitably picked me up and brought me ack to Egypt, I should have been probably hopped into messes by this time at Bokkhara,

and have had Joseph Wolf pilgrimizing acro
the desert to ascertain whereabouts my r
mains were eaten by the jackals."

"I cannot but congratulate you, howeve
my dear sir, on the valuable opportuniti
you have enjoyed of turning to account t
resources of a classical education!" rejoin
Settringham, evidently preparing to displ
his own erudition in the questions he w
about to inflict upon his rival.

But Sir Herbert had too little taste for su
exhibitions (a serious nuisance in a qu
country party) to indulge his pretensions.

"To own the truth, and speaking it to
shame," said he, "I travelled chiefly to f
get what I had learned. How are we e
to become classical authorities to our s
cessors, if we contemplate men and thi
only through the eyes of antiquity? I
content to see the cities and countries I vi
as they present themselves; to study th
laws as they exist, their buildings as th

and, and their customs as they jar against
y own, without caring what was done in the
me spot in the days of Xerxes; and, when
eary of examining what presents itself, would
ther speculate concerning the future desti-
es of the nation with which I am in contact,
an lose my way, misled by conflicting guides,
nong the dreary mazes of the olden time."

"You are at least a lucky man to have
d the alternative at command!" rejoined
r. Settringham, a little nettled. "But we
untry bumpkins, whose fate it is to stay at
me and hoe our turnips, are fain to con-
nt ourselves with intelligence derived from
ooks."

"But don't you see, my dear Settringham,"
terposed Reresby Mordaunt, "that it is
e inordinate vanity of my friend Glynne
hich makes him disdain the use of pilots
d choose his own channel?"

"At the risk of shipwreck!" retorted Sir
erbert. "But, at all events, my foolhardi-

ness endangers no other man.—I have n
tention of publishing the chart of my d
veries. The selfish purpose of my trav
accomplished. All I ever intended w
drive from my mind certain disagre
thoughts to which England had given
and avoid the *corvée* of fashionable li
which the rising youth of Britain is
between twenty and twenty-five."

"I have usually heard *that* period
dered the pleasantest part of a man's
observed the matter of fact Lady Me
with a conciliatory simper; "before
comes involved in the duties and resp
lities that mingle cares with his pleasur

"And preserve his destiny from the i
glare of a Chinese landscape—all su
and no shade!"—retorted Sir Herbert
lower voice;—for he submitted in poli
to have his opinions ironed flat by his
neighbour, though there was no occas
have them previously starched by the p

But I confess I regard what your ladyship
ls the duties and responsibilities of life,—
h, for instance, as parliamentary commit-
s, or dabbling in stocks or railroads,—as
less laborious than the work I see gra-
tously undertaken by certain of my young
ends; who, after rising at one and break-
ting on cigars, have to undergo a *déjeûner*,
matinée musicale previous to their ride in
park; then, after scampering home to dress
an eight o'clock dinner-party, despatch a
ncert or the opera, previous to commencing
round of balls; ending the night nearly as
ey began the day, with cigars and brandy
l water, and the morning sun shining full
on their orgies!"—

"But I assure you *all* young men in Lon-
n do not lead so unprofitable a life!"—
eaded Lady Melfont, fearing that, as Miss
ordaunt's attention was occasionally at-
acted towards them, she might suspect the
nid sickly George of a share in these fright-

ful excesses.—"My son never smokes.
son dines quietly with his family a
o'clock."—

"All are not blessed with a family s
sonable to fall back upon!" replied Si
bert.—"When, to secure the first bu
the overture on opera nights, I dine
the waiters at my club look heartily as
of me; and bring me the Morning Hera
stead of an evening paper, as a sno
ought to be satisfied with second best."

"My son is always one of the first
stalls!" observed her ladyship, again gl
with partial eyes at the blushing Georg

"Mr. Melfont is fortunate in belong
those whose habits favour his tastes,"
Sir Herbert, politely.—"But, generally
ing, I find my London friends, both o
young, instead of indulging the tenden
their inclination, occupied solely in st
bustling, and elbowing each other, in
to obtain front seats in the gaudy the

ion.—People may talk of the Wars of the Roses; but I doubt whether they occa-ed half the care or outlay produced by grand struggle of modern times, between rival battalions of the rich and great."

Not *rival* battalions, surely?" argued Melfont. "So many of the great *are* !"—

The most considerable territorial fortunes, aps, lie with the aristocracy," replied Herbert, more gravely; "but, with few ptions, the least available. Were an an- mortgage-list published like those of army and navy, setting forth the liabili- of our nobility, the moneyed magnats of land would add a cubit to their stature to the depression of their neighbours.— k at the amount of landed property which, in the last fifty years, has changed hands; you will find that the plebeian interest doubled its stake in the country!"—

ot precisely comprehending his drift,

and afraid that the mere utterance o
word "plebeian" in his dining-room
hurt the feelings of Mr. Mordaunt,
Melfont was not a little rejoiced that t
fruit at that moment placed on the
afforded her a safe topic for eulogium.

"I must admit," said Sir Herbert,
I never tasted, in tropical climates, by
taneous growth, fruit half so delicious
for which England is indebted to the res
of art."

"Because," observed Reresby, "tho
incur the cost of cultivation are na
careful to select the finer kinds. But
expect *me* to forswear myself, by maint
that England affords anything to c
with the purple figs and transparent a
of the Levant!"—

"*Mi basta il palazzo Pitti!!*—I am c
with those of Deasmarsh," replied Si
bert. "A tawny-cheeked Moor-Pa
me!"—

The Deasmarsh forcing-houses, however, scarcely come into full play for a couple ears," added Mr. Mordaunt, the conver- on having become general. "At our e in Lancashire, which adjoined my ory, the stoves and succession-houses the benefit of our surplus steam, and we warm baths in the house gratuitously ed in the same manner. There, I had d time to bring the whole system to ection ;—whereas, at Deasmarsh, the fruit vice as costly, and half as fine."

latilda was ashamed of the blush that upon her cheek at this allusion to the times she was so anxious Sir Herbert ne should forget. But her anxiety was dily relieved by his enthusiastic ejacu- ns.

Thank you, my dear sir," said he, "for ng relieved my scruples! I was afraid offering an affront to your Northampton- e grapes by admitting that, even in Syria,

I never tasted any half so fine as at B
mill; nor did I ever see in the East
exquisite roses as those you had in cu
tion at the old place."

"Why, yes! I believe we succeeded p
well in our gardening," replied Mr. Mor
in a gratified tone; "and my partner, v
a richer man than I am, from being chil
has done a great deal more to the place s
quitted it. The fact is," added he, pro
"that, with the exception of Middlesex,
is not a shire in England where so
money is applied to the enjoyments o
as in our manufacturing county of
caster; more, in fact, than is altog
safe, or perhaps altogether right. One
many motives for removal was the u
doubt perpetually struggling in my
whether I were justified in exposing the l
of my existence to the envy of those
able neighbours by whom it was created

"I don't know what you call misc

ıy dear sir," exclaimed Sir Herbert. "All know is, that I never beheld a more pro-perous or contented race than your workmen t Burtsmill!"

"I trust so!—I trust in God they were ıriving and contented," rejoined Mr. Mor-aunt; "for to them am I indebted for all ıy prosperity. But it was not so throughout ıe district; nor could I ride five miles ahead, ithout running against a population whose retchedness deprived me of all appetite for ectarines and peaches. Unable to relieve, I as glad to escape the sight of this human egradation; but, thanks to the wisdom of the eformed parliament, I shall go to my grave ıe easier for having seen the evil sensibly ıminish. It is one of the noblest tasks of ıose who legislate for the next generation, ımong whom, thank Heaven, my son will be ıortly numbered!) that they will have to ljust more nicely the balance of human ɔmfort between rich and poor."

Matilda was not sorry that the tim
come for the ladies to rise from table a
pair to the drawing-room. For, though
of the candour with which her father re
to his condition of life, she was glad
spared the arguments certain to aris
his last observation; Sir William Settri
and Lord Melfont being stanch protecti
and accustomed to fight their battle
an acrimonious intolerance of ultra-t
which it required more than the wise
ration of Mr. Mordaunt to parry.

On their entrance half an hour afte
into the conservatory, where the lady
were taking coffee, there seemed, ho
little justification of Matilda's appreh
that they had been engaged in the
county-gentleman-warfare of pauperis
poor-laws; for the first question ad
to her by Sir Herbert Glynne, who
straight towards her leading her brot
the sleeve, regarded the name of a very

tiful girl, whom they had encountered while urrying home across the fields from shooting, o dress for dinner.

"Reresby insists upon it that she is a Miss Cromer," said Sir Herbert. "But, between he little cherry-lipped fairy, with her silken inglets and infantine graces to whom I lost my eart yesterday, and the regular features and aven braids of the pale-faced nun fawned upon his morning by our pointers, like Una by the ions, I cannot perceive the least analogy."

"*Was* it Miss Cromer whom you met?" nquired Matilda of her brother.

"I conclude so; a very lovely girl, with ark hair, attired in the deepest mourning,— ust as you have described her to me."

"A cousin, then, and not a sister, of our retty friend, Emma," said she, addressing ir Herbert, as if in explanation. "I agree ith *you* that hers is one of the finest faces ever saw."

"And you are really boy enough to have

thrown away your heart upon the pretty
bachelor's-button at the Rectory, Re
when this rose unique was blooming i
neighbourhood?" cried Sir Herbert wi
or affected indignation.

"Who told you I had thrown aw
heart?"

"Yourself, when we met in London.
I asked you what had induced so g
crowd-seeker as yourself to maunder a
large a portion of the season in the c
instead of citing the merits of Dea
and all that it contains as sufficient a
you spoke of a pretty prattling little
bour, who had been shedding honey-de
your spring!"

"A little less Oriental, if you plea
told you that, though our principal neig
had left the country, Deaswold H
afforded a charming supplement to the
circle, in the shape of a very sensible n
very pretty girl—"

" From whom you found it a hard matter tear yourself away!"

" From whom, perhaps, I may have found a hard matter to tear myself away; but, ving accomplished the difficulty, whom I ould have found it an equally hard matter remember in London, had it been desirable, which it was *not*."

" You are, in short, at perfect liberty to l in love with the beautiful creature at ose feet Don and Donna threw themselves is morning?"

"The one dilemma is scarcely the necessary nsequence of the other," rejoined Reresby, re reserved than his friend, whose Irish od sometimes overmastered his discretion.

" The dark beauty, perhaps, is not so dear friend of yours as the chestnut?" said Sir erbert, addressing Matilda.

Miss Mordaunt shook her head.

" Useless, then, I fear, to apply to you for introduction to her?" returned he. " And

yet, she seemed so much at home in
glebe meadows, that I fancied she must
resident in Deaswold."

"She is so,—but I have only seen h
church. Miss Cromer is the only dau
of the gentleman you heard spoken o
dinner as having brought an action ag
my father, and treated him, on various
sions, with the greatest animosity."

"Then I wash my hands of the bea
cried Sir Herbert, "for she belongs to
lot. Whoever could find it in his hea
show animosity to Mr. Mordaunt, must
rish other things there, rendering hi
different company for christians. Le
lovely Miss Cromer content herself wit
allegiance of the pointers!—I beg to
nothing further to say to her!"

"How easily you are prejudiced, and ho
justly!" exclaimed Miss Mordaunt, with
earnestness. "Magdalen Cromer is o
the most amiable and excellent persons

world. From her uncle and cousin, as well s among the poor of Deaswold, I have heard nnumerable traits of her goodness."

Matilda did not pause to observe that it as her brother rather than his friend who nt an attentive ear to these encomiums.

"And just now," she continued, still ldressing herself to Sir Herbert, "she is eculiarly an object of interest, from having ecently lost her two only sisters by a rapid ecline."

"*She* does not look consumptive," observed eresby, thinking aloud. "Though pale, ere was something in her gait as firm as it as graceful."

"Were it not for the devotedness of my tle friend Emma," continued Miss Morunt, "the poor girl would be left entirely the society of her crabbed and uninterestg father and mother; people so little liked the neighbourhood that nobody who can lp it ever goes near them. And think

what a resource her company would ha
been to *me*, but for the ill-feeling of M
Cromer!"

"I am more inclined to think of wh
your society would have been to *her!*"
joined Sir Herbert with spirit. "The l
be on her father's head;—who deserves re
bution scarcely less bitter, for having attemp
to harass Mr. Mordaunt."

But Reresby made *no* rejoinder. As if
had heard enough, or perhaps too much
the Cromers, he was slowly sauntering alo
the conservatory towards the house; gazi
upwards with vacant eyes at the scar
streamers of the passiflora. Had a pit
opened at his feet, the young heir of De
marsh would unquestionably have fallen
victim to his abstraction of mind!—

CHAPTER VIII.

Good nature has an endless source of pleasures in it; and the representation of domestic life, filled with its natural gratifications (instead of the vexations insisted upon in the writings of the witty), is a good office to society.

SIR RICHARD STEELE.

Though the Rectory of Deaswold put forth no greater claims to tastefulness or comfort than the family mansion which stared it out of countenance from the opposite hill, there was a simplicity in its details that bespoke indulgence. If the forecourt, surrounded by evergreens, were dull and formal, the massive beauty of the old bay-trees and noble size of the weeping ash, whose branches almost covered the grass-plot gracing the centre, afforded some compensation.

The sitting-room, which opened f
somewhat dingy wainscoted hall oppos
eating parlour, though called the libr
compliment to the small portion of it
pied by the worthy Rector's old-fas
folios of divinity (which looked as i
knew what they were about far bette
the controversial octavos of modern C
standing spruce and gold-lettered by
side), abounded in tokens of being
with his little daughter. But for the br
of jessamine and musk-rose by whic
southern front was covered, that str
across the window, it would have worn a
aspect, however, to be the abiding-place
so light-hearted as Emma. But the
that peeped in, as if in search of a be
kindred with themselves, matched we
her workbox and a few gaily-bound v
of choice poetry, gift-books to the child
house.

Yes, "*child!*" — though advancing

ge of womanhood. The dutiful feelings ren-
ering it almost as much a matter of religion
o the daughter as to the Rector himself, to
bstain from the slightest change in the room
hich had been disposed in its present state
y her late mother—her mother, whom, by
he utmost effort of memory, she could not
nanage to recollect, were faithful with the
aith of childhood. To have filled the room
ith furniture as rich and beautiful as that of
Deasmarsh, Emma would not have relin-
uished the old-fashioned walnut-wood bureau,
n which her mother was known to have kept
er letters and account-books. The only
ifference was, that it was now surmounted
y a glass case containing all that remained
f her earliest pet — a favourite guinea-hen,
iven her by "mamma;" on the death of
hich, of old age, her father had acceded to
er wish of having it stuffed; and, thanks
o the genius of a Northampton naturalist,
he homely, domestic fowl had been made to

assume the appearance of a nondescript ornithological specimen, that would have sadly puzzled Audubon or Yarrell.

The old-fashioned window-seats commanded a small garden, the turf of which was smooth as velvet,—the flower-beds by which it was terminated being divided only by a haha from the well-wooded paddocks of an extensive glebe; a pleasanter view, apparently, in the estimation of both Emma and her cousin Magdalen than the interminable landscape stared over by the Hall; for there they sat conversing, morning after morning, hour after hour—their needlework sometimes in their hands, but oftener in their lap; their young heads enframed by the pendent bunches of pale musk-roses, imparting fragrance to the room, till the even-song of the thrushes and blackbirds, abounding in the Rectory garden, reminded the elder and graver girl that it was time to claim her uncle's arm for returning home.

On the morrow of her encounter with the oung sportsmen, her customary chat with er cousin was interrupted by the numerous uestions to which Emma, on hearing of the eeting, chose to have explicit answers.

"She had seen Reresby Mordaunt then? -What did she think of him?—Was he as andsome as she expected?—Was he not vice as good-looking as his friend Sir Her- ert?"—

And when it appeared that Magdalen had aken too little note of either to be able to istinguish between them, for the first time her life, Emma a little mistrusted her aste and discernment.

"Reresby Mordaunt was half a head taller han his friend. Reresby's figure and gait ere infinitely superior!"

"I saw more of the gait of their dogs than f their own," replied Magdalen, with a smile. It was as much as I could do to ward off he attentions of a great black setter, who

seemed determined to ascertain the con
of the packet of tea and sugar I was
rying to the lodge-keeper's wife."

"Still, you must have seen that —"

"I assure you, dear Emma, I saw no
but the outlines of two figures in shoo
jackets—who called off their dogs when
grew so troublesome."

"*My* interest concerning Sir He
Glynne," observed the Rector's daug
blushing from the fear that Magdalen's
ference purported to convey a reproa
her warmth, "arises from a suspicion th
and Matilda Mordaunt have been, o
likely to be, engaged. I never saw h
unlike herself as when I dined there, two
ago. She seemed scarcely to know wha
was saying or doing;—and by the care
which she avoided meeting the eyes o
Herbert, or answering his observations
not expressly addressed to her, I feel as
that he is the object of her preference."

"Are such then, my dear Emma, the symptoms of affection?"—inquired Magdalen, a little amused by the tone of experience in which her little cousin laid down the law. But the prompt reply of Emma disarmed her.

"Such is Mr. Melfont's deportment towards Matilda herself; and *his* attachment is no secret in the neighbourhood. He has proposed to her, you know, again and again."

"And is there anything in Sir Herbert Glynne,—besides the good looks you speak of, to justify her partiality?"

"*That* I can hardly tell you. I observed him as closely as I could;—listened to every word he uttered, and watched every movement; for, loving Matilda as I do, I should be miserable if she made an unhappy choice."

"And do you feel in danger of being miserable?" persisted Magdalen, still smiling at her earnestness.

Emma hesitated for a moment.

"No!" said she, at last. "He seems

right-thinking, and lively, and gentlema
But what startles and vexes me is the s
ness between him and Reresby. There
likeness and yet a difference betwixt t
in all they say and do, that keeps one's a
tion perpetually on the stretch. Till
Herbert came, I thought Matilda's br
the most amusing and original person i
world. He was the first clever young
—the first young man of the world—
whom I was ever in company (for it i
offence to my cousins, Magdalen, to say
the retired life they have led prevents
being *very* polished. But, since I saw
Herbert Glynne, I have begun to fear
what I took for an exclusive charm and pa
lar merit, is only the jargon of a class.
afraid that, if I went into the world, I sh
see hundreds and hundreds of Reresbys.'

"But why *afraid?*—If you find Mr.
daunt so agreeable, you ought to rejoice
others are equally pleasant."

"Rejoice!—oh, no. It is mortifying to el that one has been cheated into over- miration of anything or anybody!" cried nma—little dreaming how apparent to her usin was the excess of her admiration of e brother of her friend.—"There seemed mething so brilliant in the sallies of Reresby something so wonderful in his travels— mething so buoyant in his spirits. I cer- inly *did* think there was but *one* such in the rld! And now"—

She had not time to finish the sentence. ie sudden appearance of her father gave a w turn to her thoughts. But, just as she s beginning to tell him that he was come actly in time to escort Magdalen back to e Hall, a fine, tall young man appeared be- nd the Rector—away from whom poor nma looked so pointedly as to justify to r cousin the theory she had so recently en broaching.

"Here is my friend Reresby, my dear,

anxious to lay at your feet the first land
we have seen this year; but scrupulous a
parading his shooting-jacket in presenc
ladies."

As soon as his daughter had reassured
visitor by a sufficient welcome, the R
proceeded to present him to his niece.
the moment, indeed, he forgot that ther
isted the slightest cause for demur. A
moment, he saw in Reresby only a guest u
his roof. But even when he came to r
lect the enmity between the Hall and I
marsh, he experienced no regret at ha
obeyed the first impulse of his cordial na
Who could say but an acquaintance bet
the young people might in the end l
about a reconciliation between their pare

By the assiduity with which young
daunt endeavoured to recommend himsel
the gentle girl into whose presence he
thus unexpectedly stumbled, it was clear
he at least cherished no rancour against

mily. Nay, a more suspicious man than the
pen-hearted Jacob might have been tempted
fancy that the eagerness with which young
lordaunt had jumped over a stile to join him
the glebe pastures, and the pertinacity
ith which he followed him to his own door,
ight arise from previous knowledge that his
vely niece was housed under his roof.

Nothing, however, was easier than to find
pics of conversation. Apologies for the
eedoms taken by Don and Donna were fol-
wed by allusions to a thousand facts and a
riety of personages belonging to the neigh-
ourhood, tending to prove that if it were
ly the preceding day Reresby had ob-
ined ocular demonstration that he resided
ithin two miles of an angel, popular report
d long satisfied him of the fact.

Unused to the company of strangers, al-
ough the marble purity of Magdalen's com-
lexion afforded no outward token of em-
rrassment or emotion, the varying intonation

of her voice evinced no want of symp
in the compliments she was receiving
the generosity with which her good d
were brought home to her. And whe
innumerable kind expressions Reresby
daunt added an assurance of the regret
disappointment experienced by his sister
himself that, in a neighbourhood so lim
they should be excluded from the society
he was going to say its brightest orname
but the prudence of second thoughts
duced him to modify the phrase into
near a relative of his friends at the Rec
Magdalen did not hesitate to admit a
procal regret.

All that was earnest—all that was fe
in the young sportsman's expressions
demeanour, appeared to *her* the natural r
of his preference of her cousin.—She n
in fact, have been deaf not to overhear
Emma's aside to her visitor, while she
tying on her bonnet to return home esco

by her uncle, of—"Did I not tell you how much you would like her?—did I not assure you she was as pleasing as she is good and beautiful?"

Nay, even when Reresby replied by a burst of enthusiastic panegyric, all that Magdalen experienced was gratitude towards the kind girl who, present or absent, was so warm a friend; and it was only want of self-possession that prevented her reminding her uncle, when Reresby proposed accompanying them so far on their way as the confines of the domain of Cromer Hall, that her father might be seriously displeased on hearing of her intimacy with any member of the Mordaunt family.

The impetuosity of Reresby's character and manner, however, imposed silence on her gentle nature; and when, on arriving at the green lane that led toward Deasmill and separated Deasmarsh and the glebe from the plantations of the Hall, he extended his hand towards her instead of raising his hat as she

expected, it was impossible to withhold
own.

Though, while slowly ascending the
leaning upon her uncle's arm, she did
once glance back towards the path he
be pursuing, to ascertain whether he
watching their ascent, she felt, with th
stinct in which even the least coqueti
her sex is not deficient, that his eyes
fixed upon their movements till they re
the very door of the Hall.

Yes! Emma was right. He *was* a per
singularly ingratiating manners. The
ness of his air, the sparkling intellige
his eye, the apparent earnestness of h
sire to find sympathy in those with wh
was conversing, added a thousand gra
his person. Magdalen admitted to
that she had never seen any man so
tive. He appeared to be as warm-hear
her uncle, as animated as her cousin.
Mordaunt were only half so charmin

eat was her loss in the feud that exiled her
om Deasmarsh!

The number of times that the daughter of
e Squire pondered these thoughts in her
nd in the course of that tedious evening
ould be hard to reckon; and almost equally
ten was she forced to remind herself that
e was unpardonable in envying the consi-
ration for his daughter's happiness evinced
her uncle, in the suppression of his dislikes
d cultivation of his friendships. The Rec-
r's political principles, for instance, were
ra-conservative; yet for the sake of socia-
ity and the advantage of his parish, he
oided the possibility of a misunderstanding
th a neighbour whose views were so adverse
his own, by declining all political con-
versy.

"I am too old and too obstinate to be con-
rted," was his plea on the first attempt
ade by Mr. Mordaunt to engage him in a
scussion on free-trade; "nor will I pay you

so poor a compliment, my dear sir, as
your opinions so ill-considered as to
turned by any argument of mine. L
therefore, keep his prejudices close a
count books. We shall have enough
spare to fight about, betwixt the old
school of farming, without flinging
headlong into the raging gulf of poli

"If it were only possible," thoug
dalen, "to moderate in the same ma
petulance of my father! But, alas
day serves to widen the breach bet
and Deasmarsh."

How was it, in fact, to be repaired, s
Vickers the attorney obtained his livi
the maintenance of the feud? The ac
pending was giving rise to a corresp
such as it required all the gentlemanl
of Mr. Mordaunt to treat with temp
a day but the cross-post from Nort
brought further grounds of aggravati
now that the chaste loveliness of M

comer had bespoken the indulgence of eresby, he, on the other hand, had no pa-ence with the circumstantiality with which r. Ghrimes, his father's man of business, nsidered it his duty to dilate upon the in-lts of the Squire, whom they all knew to a fool; or his attorney, whom they all spected to be a knave.

"Where is the good of keeping open the w?" said he to his sister one day, when s father had amused them by reading aloud breakfast one of these provoking state-ents of what had been better left unstated. I am convinced that, were there no such ings as lawyers in the world, half the uabbles that beget ill-blood in human na-re would collapse and fall to the ground."

"And yet, I sometimes wish my father ould treat them otherwise than as a joke!" served Matilda, deeply hurt that Sir Her-rt, who was present, should have been ad-itted behind the scenes. "If, in the first

instance, he had taken up the matter seriously with our good Rector, he undoubtedly have brought about a bette derstanding with his brother; but, so lo Jacob is allowed to fluctuate like a ba tween the two armies, he has no motiv promoting a reconciliation. Even Emma has been made so much of in this house enjoyed herself here so much more th the Hall, evidently looks upon her unc the great man, who cannot be expect descend on light ground from his super of birth and station!"

Little suspecting that this unusual b ness was produced by a spice of the jea inherent in every female nature, Reresb gan to fear that Matilda, too, was dis to stimulate the antagonism he was an to lay at rest. He fancied that *she* too rished vindictive feelings against the Ha

It certainly was not likely to soften that, in the course of the next ten days

rother so often contrived to engage his friend
ir Herbert Glynne in walks, and rides, and
ives, and visits, that brought them into
mpany with the two cousins. Beresby
ordaunt, (into whose head it had never en-
red that the man whose entire confidence
e believed himself to possess was secretly
tached to his sister,) having mentioned to
ir Herbert, previous to the arrival of the
elfont family at Deasmarsh, that, though
eir son and heir had been refused by Ma-
lda, such was the strength of his attach-
ent, and such the desire of Lord and Lady
elfont to see her his wife, that her parents
d sanctioned the renewal of his addresses,
e considered that he had no right to avail
mself of his facilities as a guest under the
of of the Mordaunts, to frustrate a match
advantageous. "No, no!—since they
uld put up with nothing short of a coronet,
e insignificant individual with two left arms
d two left legs, and an equally halting un-

derstanding, whom his peerage in per
tive was supposed to render worthy th
gard of one of the most charming gi
England, should not be cheated o
chance."

And as it was difficult for Sir Herb
explain the disappointment of his pr
to account for a sudden curtailment o
visit, the utmost he could do was to
a fair field for George Melfont, by pert
ously accompanying his friend Reresby, d
the remainder of his stay at Deasmar
his shootings, fishings, ramblings, and
sions at the Rectory.

While this inseparability was imput
poor Matilda to admiration of the p
childish Emma, Sir Herbert, too absorb
the contrarieties of his situation to take
heed of the fluctuations of feeling of his f
and convinced that the "bachelor's
ton" was still the secret object of his
ration, he fancied that he was doing

vour, whenever they chanced upon Emma
d her cousin in their rides or walks, by
ldressing his conversation exclusively to
agdalen, so as to remove all obstacle from
s laughing and chatting with the Rector's
aughter:—an attention which tempted poor
eresby to wish that his fidus Achates would
ccasionally fulfil the duties of country visit-
g, by devoting attendance to the ladies of
he house in which he was staying.

For to Reresby it appeared impossible that
ne who had looked face to face upon the pure
nd intellectual beauty of Magdalen, could
rom that moment conceive any other female
ace worthy a moment's consideration; and
nce when, having chanced to meet her with
er cousin in a straggling coppice at the ex-
remity of the glebe, Sir Herbert not only
nsisted upon carrying for Miss Cromer a
asket of wood-sorrel roots which she had
been to seek in the woods to be transplanted
into her own garden, but inquired whether it

was forbidden to *him* as well as to Mr.
daunt's son to escort them as far as the
of the Hall, in a fit of momentary irrit
young Mordaunt was tempted to regard
a proposition on the part of his frie
almost a declaration of love. So
were the answers he addressed to poor I
for the remainder of the walk, so h
appeared his brow, and so strange hi
portment, that she scarcely knew what to
of him.

"I wish I could persuade you, Miss Cro
said Sir Herbert, meanwhile, in a bant
tone, (into which, on any other occ
Reresby would have freely entered) "
came straight from the railway stati
Deaswold;—that I was the keeper of
nagerie,—or a bagman travelling with
ples of sewing cotton or Scotch cambr
or one of the jackals of the Mendicity So
—or any other character, rather than a gu
Deasmarsh!—It is rather hard upon an

fensive party, like myself, to be tabooed, as a punishment for being the friend of an individual of the name of Mordaunt; and, I assure you, it is doing me and yourselves a great injustice to exclude me from Cromer Hall. Send my friend Reresby to Coventry as thoroughly as you please. Suspicious characters of *his* kind cannot be kept at too great a distance. We would *all* send him to Coventry if we could. Your excellent uncle at the Rectory has, in fact, hinted to me that he finds the frequency of his visits a considerable nuisance."

"My *father*?—Dear Magdalen, I am sure you will not believe any thing of the kind!" cried Emma, panting with indignation.

"I hope you do not imagine that Mr. Cromer would confide his sentiments on such subjects to one of your tender years?" cried Sir Herbert, not a little amused by the genuine storm of indignation which his irony had called up in the hazel eyes usually so

mirthful. "Even to *me*, he spoke se
on the subject, only in the hope that
tervention might secure him from
tinuance of the evil!"—

"I wonder you are not ashamed to
such a thing, Sir Herbert Glynne!"
Emma, with increasing disgust.

"Trust me, lady fair, I have lived too
be ashamed of *any* thing," replied Sir H
gravely, "unless sometimes of allowing
tural modesty of my character to interfe
the discharge of a duty:—such, for insta
that of carrying the basket, which even
muscular arm is no trifling burthen, as
the door of Cromer Hall, instead of sn
off when we reach the lodge, like a p
when a keeper comes in sight."—

"I should be happy to introduce
my father and mother," interposed Ma
becoming apprehensive, from the c
nances of both Reresby Mordaunt and
of some bitter rejoinder,—"had n

recent severe affliction in my family closed heir doors against all but our nearest relations."—

Even the forced spirits of Sir Herbert Glynne were tranquillized by the grave sadness of her voice; and they parted at the usual spot, with less perhaps than the customary regret.

CHAPTER IX.

Men of good birth are noted to be envious tow
men when they rise; for the distance is altered,
like a deceit of the eye, that when others come
think themselves go backward.

For some time past, the cordiality b
the Hall and Rectory had suffered som
ruption; and even the intimacy of t
girls became gradually affected by the

The sacrifices continually made by
to prevent her cousin Magdalen from fa
herself neglected for the sake of Deas
were at length *felt* to be sacrifices; fo
that she had attained the age of reas
grave cousin who, as being three year
than herself, had evinced during her chi
an almost motherly indulgence for he
ardness, now called her to account wh
she considered her in fault.

Such at least were the motives which each ssigned to herself for seeing less of her cousin. he Cromer Hall family noticed nothing of ıe change; the Squire being too much occu- ied with his farm, and the Squire's wife with ıe domestic economy of her household, to ake heed of such trifles as the comfort or roceedings of their daughter. Resenting in ıe bitterness of their souls the familiarity of ıe Rector of Deaswold with his chief parish- oner, they were, in fact, better pleased that Iagdalen should find less attraction in a house vhere she was exposed to the chance of meeting he various members of the Mordaunt family. It might be a similar apprehension that so ften averted Miss Cromer's morning walks rom the Rectory, to which, of old, they were lmost daily directed. More particularly since er accidental introduction to Reresby. The agerness with which he had profited by the first pportunity to make her acquaintance, placed ıer on her guard against encountering Miss

Mordaunt in a spot where Matilda's s
coldness might perhaps evince resentm
the affronts heaped on her family by t
Cromer Hall.

For Magdalen was sufficiently a phys
mist to have noticed, when occasiona
eyes met those of Miss Mordaunt on e
or quitting Deaswold Church, that the
facturer's daughter had re-assumed her
severity of mien. Even her salutati
Emma were tinctured by a certain de
reserve. The lighter-hearted cousin, p
might not perceive it. But this, Ma
taxed against her as a fault. She *ought*
ceive it. She *ought* to be forearmed agains
ness on the part of rich people from wh
accepted advantages she was unable to r

For, as it could not of course enter i
conjectures of Magdalen that Miss Mo
laid to the charge of Emma's girlish coq
the fact that Sir Herbert Glynne, in s
his unconcealed joy at seeing her agai

become gradually distant in his manner, and at length quitted Deasmarsh without further indication of preference, she set down the coolness, which was in reality the result of wounded feelings, to the vulgar hauteur of a *parvenue*.

By neither Matilda nor Magdalen was it surmised that if Sir Herbert Glynne found his way to Deaswold Rectory oftener than was desirable, and occasionally when he must have known the Rector to be engaged elsewhere, it was solely at the suggestion of Reresby. Either because some atonement seemed owing to Emma for the thoughtless manner in which his own attentions had been both accorded and withdrawn, or because he fancied that the happiness of both parties would be ensured by a mutual attachment, he was always finding pretexts for despatching Sir Herbert to the Rectory; where, sooth to say, he employed his visit in eliciting from Emma anecdotes of the sheepishness of George Melfont and the ineptitude of the whole Mel-

font family; and repaid the readiness
which the poor girl supplied him with
fontiana, by stories of Reresby's triump
college, prowess in travel, and popularity
all the world; such as, by the time her v
took leave, had dyed her young cheek
permanent crimson.

The daughter was too ignorant of the
of the world, and the father too hospi
and simple-hearted, to discern any thing
usual in these almost daily visits. Cons
that to herself they were rendered char
only by affording information conce
Reresby, Emma, indeed, said nothing
the matter; and it was only the acut
of jealousy which enabled Miss Mordau
discover how large a portion of Sir
bert's mornings were spent apart from
brother.

For a moment, she was almost tempt
repent having opened the eyes of Re
to the intellectual inferiority of the gi

om he had shown some disposition to at-
h himself.

Still, it was severe retribution upon her
idiousness as a sister, to have the little
age coquette throw herself at the head of
Herbert Glynne!—

Of the result of his projects in favour of
friend, Reresby, on the other hand, took
le heed. His thoughts were otherwise en-
ged. Whatever the party assembled at
asmarsh, or however good the sporting
en they repaired together to the battues
Settringham Abbey, nothing now ap-
ared to arrest his attention.

"My son is taking up his new vocation in
od earnest," was his father's explanation to
neighbours of the young man's altered de-
rtment. "The constitutional studies which
travels had caused him a little to neglect,
cupy his whole time; and my son is going
rough a steady course of English law and
rliamentary history.—When once he has

taken his seat, there will be little
reading; and I am thankful to find
reasonable as to forestal the difficulty

So gullible, indeed, was the m
abounding in good faith, suspected
the hands of others, that, even if less
that Reresby should not accompany h
on their Lancashire expedition, h
have readily acceded to his son's su
that "it would be as well he should r
Deasmarsh during their absence, and
follow up the line of study he had tra

"I shall not be sorry," whispere
his wife, "to have a sight of Claud
the marriage is actually proposed
young M. P.—When they parted,
four years ago,—I admit that she did
mise much.—But in the course of th
we are about to spend with Freshley,
dear, will have opportunities of jud
fairly;—and, if all be as we coul
before the close of the visit, Reresby

sent for to spend a few days with us, and decide for himself."

And Reresby was accordingly left behind to devote himself to his "constitutional studies."—For some weeks ensuing, indeed, he was so completely absorbed by this excellent purpose, as no longer to be seen cantering on his favourite hack on the road to the Station; or sauntering with Don and Donna at his heels, followed, in his transit through the village, by the benedictions of the poor. The neighbourhood, seeing nothing of him, believed him to have accompanied his family to the North; and he was consequently unmolested by invitations.

"I lead the life of a hermit," said he, in a letter to his father after rendering an account of some commissions he had executed in the village, "never crossing the bounds of the domain, except to church!—Your hint, or rather Matilda's hint, concerning the expectations that might arise from my visits to

the Rectory, prevent my seeing as m
formerly of our excellent friend there
finding me so unworthy a son of one
best farmers in Northamptonshire, is, I s
easily reconciled to the loss of my com

Not even Matilda, who was presen
the letter was read aloud to her moth
mised that, while telling the truth a
thing but the truth, the *whole* truth
unfolded by her brother; or that, if
were living the life of a hermit, it was

A hermit, with an angel for his guest!—

or, above all, that, if he eschewed the
of the Rectory, it was to avoid the da
cross-examination concerning his occu

The truth was that, if content to l
rides and walks to his father's b
grounds, it was only because secure
from all chance of intrusion on the
Cromer of Cromer Hall. It was well
that the Squire would have had his fe
off from fatigue, or condemned any me

s household to the same dispensation, rather
an abridge by three miles the most fatiguing
lk, by reaching the Hall across the pro-
rty which he had treated almost as his own
en inscribed in the maps of the shire as
ith's and Hutton's farm.

Considering the contempt with which, in
te of parochial archives and family monu-
nts, the man thus obdurate was regarded
the younger Mordaunt, it was strange
t he should so scrupulously avoid the
eting. It was not, however, as may be
mised, that Reresby was afraid to trust his
per in an encounter with one who had
n heard to indulge in gross abuse of his
her. The time for *such* a peril was past.
was that he had no mind to look in the
e the father of Magdalen; Magdalen—his
re introduction to whom had brought down
on her the reprehension of her parents;
l who would probably have incurred their
lediction could it have been surmised how

lover's protestations.—In Reresby Mo
she saw all that could captivate the
woman, or attach her affections.
handsome, gentlemanly, intelligent, d
romantic,—Romeo himself was not m
terprising or more gifted to make en
excused.—After the first stolen inter
was less culpable than natural that the
devoid of sympathy in her own family
dwell incessantly upon the meeting, t
brought about the renewal of that fo
pleasure.

It is almost an act of sacrilege to
veil from a heart so innocent. Let it
uncertain therefore with which of t
originated the unguarded proposal,
several of these hazardous encounter
they should agree on some place of m
less open to surprise.—In her father's g
however reassured by fond encourag
Magdalen never ceased to tremble lest
lent arm should be suddenly laid up

ompanion. — It was not of herself she nought. She had ceased to think of herelf. All she cared for now was that the an who showed himself ready to brave the hole world for her sake, should be secured gainst unnecessary hazard.

"To attempt any explanation with Mr. romer, in his present state of feeling towards y family, dearest Magdalen," he had argued, would be to bring down upon ourselves proibitions fatal to our future happiness. We ust trust to time, therefore,—we must trust o our own prudence."

"Alas! neither to time *nor* prudence!" ejoined Miss Cromer.—"You *would* not, ere you acquainted with my father. *His* rejudices are uneradicable. He sees no ne,—argues with no one likely to modify is opinions. Be satisfied that nothing we ould say or do would ever induce him to onsent to our union."

"Then we must some day or other take

courage to dispense with it!"—enjoin
resby with spirit.—"Mr. Cromer has
to urge against the honour or credit
family; and the opinion of the world
fully uphold our independence."

"The opinion of the world woul
nothing against my respect for my
authority," said his companion with a
ful waive of the head.

"There comes a time in every hun
my dearest Magdalen," argued the
"when parents should appeal to the
rather than the submission of their chil
when *they* must cease to be arbitrary
pect that *we* should cease to be du
My father,—I thank God for so great
ing,—prizes the happiness of his child
beyond the care of his pride; and
somely as he has been used by Mr. Cr
he saw my future comfort in life dep
marrying into the family, his consen
not be withheld."

Magdalen dared not avow that the pride of Cromer of Cromer Hall was sacred in his eyes as an article of religion, lest she should seem to convey disparagement to the Mordaunts; but it was with divided attention she listened to Reresby's statement that, on his entrance into parliament, a settlement was to be made upon him fully adequate to the maintenance of a family. "And then, dearest," continued he, fixing his impassioned eyes on the contour of her beautiful countenance, "then, Magdalen, I must endeavour to persuade you to share with me, in defiance of every body and every thing, the competence that will enable us to be all in all to each other.—Together, we shall be rich. Together, dearest, we shall be happy. Your affection will stimulate me to untiring exertions in public life. From *you* I shall derive higher impulses of action. All that my father expects of me,—all that I would fain become, in order to do honour to my

country,—will come to pass in the foste
of such a home as ours."

Such was the encouragement under w
Magdalen Cromer consented to the clande
meetings urged upon her by her lover;
as his family was now on the eve of qui
Deasmarsh for the North, leaving his tim
tirely at his disposal, unexpected facilities
afforded to the accomplishment of his wi

"It is clear, dear Magdalen," argue
in a hurried interview with the object o
attachment, immediately after the depa
of his family, "that, to secure ourselves
reach of Mr. Cromer, the spot we ch
must be on my father's property.—Lea
to me to select some place, easily attai
to yourself, where we may converse in
rity and peace."

If Magdalen did not expressly *asse*
the proposal, her resistance was only suc
to a lover's ear, implies the unpronou
affirmative!

CHAPTER X.

Now Romeo is belov'd and loves again,
Alike bewitchéd by the charm of looks;
And to his foe suppos'd he must complain,
And she, steal Love's sweet bait from fearful hooks.
Being held a foe, he may not have access
To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear,
And she, as much in love, her means much less,
To meet her new belovéd any where:
But passion lends them power: time, means to meet.
SHAKSPEARE.

In a bushy dingle adjoining the Deas, (a rapid stream, formerly the boundary between Hutton's farm and the property of old Smith, but now so skilfully widened as to form a chief ornament of the beautiful domain of Deasmarsh,) stood a tenement—the cause of no small a portion of the discord prevailing between its proprietor and Cromer Hall; having been constructed soon after his acqui-

sition of the property, with the inten
converting it into a water-mill for the
his household, had not the jealous lord
manor, to whom belonged the water-m
higher up and lower down the stream
fered with his intentions.

Unable to conceive an establishme
vast a scale as to require a corn-mill
use, Mr. Cromer foresaw a fall in the
the windmill on his own property w
lease should fall in; and a lawyer
was, consequently, despatched to
neighbour, which, under the ad
Ghrimes of Northampton, prevented
ting his projects into execution.

The mill machinery was cons
abandoned.—

Hopper, stone, and wheel,

lay disjointed and useless on the
half hidden by nettles as luxurian
malice of the Squire; and, pending
cation of the premises to some other

ıe adjoining dwelling-house, known by the ame of Deasmill, was assigned to the use of ı old servant of Mr. Mordaunt, who, shortly ter their arrival at Deasmarsh, had retired om office by intermarrying with the ex-ıiliff or "looker" of Hutton's farm.

Clemson and his wife, though too old for ctive service, spurned the idea of being pen-oned off as useless; to gratify which praise-orthy pretension, Mr. Mordaunt complied ith their whim of fancying themselves still ı active service, by placing nominally, under ıe old man's charge, the young plantations hose care was an especial hobby of his own.

The house was, consequently, finished and tted up with more care than is usually be-owed on such tenements. Matilda herself ad assisted in parcelling out and filling with owers and beehives the little garden sur-ounding it, till it became an ornament to he estate. It was only at the Hall (from vhence the unfinished mill was discernible in

the distance) that no regret was felt
obstacle to the completion of what
have added another active feature to t
and thriving landscape. The key of t
finished works was left, meanwhile,
custody of Clemson; who so seldom i
the premises that, as has been alrea
served, the waste ground was overgrov
docks, and nettles, and the aspiring
the foxglove; while into the mill its
thing but the summer sun was at the
penetrate.

Such was the spot selected by Rer
shelter the trembling hind he had c
to allure within his bounds. The C
were his devoted creatures. The ol
who had waited upon his infancy, r
the son of her mistress as a youthful
whose will was as the law of the Me
Persians; while her husband was n
clownishly submitted to the autho
Deasmarsh, as to that of the richest

of the district, but full of abhorrence of the Squire, who, when Hutton's farm was held by hands less influential than those of Mr. Mordaunt, had oppressed and harassed his humble neighbours in a spirit of petty despotism worthy of feudal times.

Next, therefore, to the satisfaction of obliging one of the name of Mordaunt, old Clemson was disposed to prize an opportunity of spiting one of the name of Cromer; and, when it was whispered to him by his wife that the young lady, for whose behoof "Master Reresby" was desirous of obtaining the key of the mill-works, was no other than the daughter of the Squire, that on the quiet bench, sheltered among its up-springing alders and hazel-bushes, they might enjoy occasional interviews secure from the scrutiny of Cromer Hall, there was a spice of malicious joy in the readiness with which he surrendered his charge into the keeping of his master's son.

And now, secure in themselves and other, Magdalen and him of whom sh pledged herself to become the wife, en their almost daily interviews. A h walk through the shrubberies of Crome brought the trembling girl into the gree leading direct to Deasmill; and the sli errand to the Rectory or village formed text for escape from home. In that dire her father never set foot;—in *no* directi mother;—and bad indeed must have be weather that disappointed them of thei tomary meeting.

Every day that brought them bett quainted added new charm to inte sweet, from the first, with the sweetnes to be attached to all stolen pleasures Magdalen soon learned to esteem as a the man who, in the first instance, had captivated her fancy. Nor was she l commanding from Reresby a degree of ence, rarely the portion of one so youn

fair. Conscious that the return of his family into Northamptonshire, and the arrival of her brothers from college, must put an end to the happiness they were enjoying, they prized it only the more from being forced to number the golden sands in their glass.

"I sometimes tremble," whispered Magdalen as they sat together on the old bench, noting with regret that even the foliage by which it was surrounded, though the most tenacious of all verdure, was beginning to fall under the influence of early frost; "I sometimes tremble lest poor Emma should perceive how seldom I now visit the Rectory, and suffer her suspicions to be aroused. Though you assure me that, after her acquaintance with Sir Herbert Glynne, she ceased to take much interest in your proceedings, surely it must strike her as strange that you scarcely ever wait upon my uncle?"—

"Do not be afraid!—Aware of my father's

desire that I should apply myself in e
to my studies, the good Rector is con
that I am shut up with my Hansard an
paper books, whetting the edge of m
Depend on it, dearest, he perfectly ap
my absence. But why do you not oc
ally contrive to see your cousin?"—

"Because I have not courage to lo
in the face!—To confide in her is out
question. Even if her discretion were
relied on, I have no right to perple
sense of right and wrong by admitting
am deliberately deceiving my parents
the blame of these furtive meetings
own head! I must not injure Emma
example. Still, to impose upon one
whom I have lived on terms of siste
fection, is an act of treachery I
attempt."—

Unable to blind himself to the tear
rolled down the pure pale cheeks of
dalen, as she alluded to the deceit sh

actising, and already chilled by painful esentiments, Reresby shrunk within himself ile the shrivelled leaves were whirled in dies around them by the gusts of the fit- breeze. It was a dreary time. The ter-flowers on the margin of the Deas re withering on their reedy stems. The eam, swollen by autumnal rains, rose reateningly to the summit of the bank, so at its coarse herbage was partly submerged. ttle temptation to be sitting under the en sky on such a spot at such a season! ot a token or portent of good was discern- le to those sufficiently ill at ease within emselves to look anxiously abroad for nens.—

"If I am to see you thus unhappy, my vn dear Magdalen, from the mere anticipa- on of our separation," whispered Reresby, hen, under the influence of that universal rearineas, the tears of his companion in- reased so as to demand his aid in wiping

them away, "I vow to Heaven I w
the worst at once!—We cannot be
more miserable by Mr. Cromer's se
And there is always a chance that the
nature in his heart may plead someth
our favour."—

Somewhat better acquainted than I
with the heart in question, Magdalen
herself from her despondency to implo
to refrain from such an act of madne
premature and precipitate disclosure.—

"We must trust in Providence and
other," said she; "for at present, belie
nothing must be attempted with my f
And if —"

Her own name, pronounced in an
whisper, apparently at her elbow, susp
the words of remonstrance on her lips;
Reresby, starting up, perceived throug
nearly leafless branches the face of old
Clemson, full of mysterious import
beckoning him towards her garden-palin

"Either lock yourselves into the mill, or let the young lady come round into my house," said she, "for, as sure as life, Mr. Reresby, there's folks upon the watch in the lane!"—

The former alternative presented so much the greater temptation, that Reresby, in communicating to Magdalen the old lady's panic, did not so much as allude to the second proposition. Till all probability of espial seemed out of the question, therefore, they remained in their retreat, still absorbed by the discussion in which Mrs. Clemson's fears had surprised them. But when at length, after Reresby had previously beat the bushes and examined every lurking place, Magdalen ventured forth and hurried across the lane into her uncle's meadows, with the intention of paying a short visit at the Rectory as a pretext for her absence from home, young Mordaunt almost repented not having accepted Mrs. Clemson's thoughtful offer.

For, scarcely had the mourning garment
Magdalen disappeared in the distance, w
he distinctly saw one of the Squire's
bourers emerge from behind a pollard-wil
situated a few yards above the entranc
Clemson's garden, and start off at spee
the direction of the Hall!

To overtake the fugitive, and by bribe
threats secure his discretion, was Reres
first impulse. But he found that the
was already out of sight. Nor had he
rage to follow Miss Cromer and endeavo
warn her of what had occurred, lest
dread of finding herself in her father's
sence, under such circumstances, should
vent her returning home. He had seen
tremble at mere mention of her fat
name; more especially since the irritatio
his feud with Deasmarsh stimulated his
stubborn nature.

"Better trust to chance!" was the m
logue of the agitated lover, as he directe

eps across his father's grounds towards the ouse. "I may be mistaken. The man ay have been lurking there on some pil- ering errand of his own; and I doubt whe- ier one of the Squire's men *dare* accost him ith such a story! No need therefore unne- essarily to alarm poor Magdalen."—

Sore, however, was his heart within him, hen he reflected that, even had not her rothers been on the point of arriving at the Iall, and within a week, his own family at Deasmarsh, the espial he had witnessed ould render it unpardonable on *his* part betray his beloved Magdalen into further eril of detection.—

His fears had not, even in the first instance, utstripped the truth. The following day, hen Magdalen entered her mother's sitting- oom soon after breakfast, to inquire whether Irs. Cromer had any work or occupation to ssign her for the day, her foot was sus- ended on the threshold by the sound of her

father's voice at the highest pitch of e
bation. Even her mother, rarely exci
anger by any thing more important th
discovery that her damask table-cloth
been cut by the carelessness of the fo
or her preserved apricots suffered to
was indulging in epithets that pr
pointed at the delinquency of some g
housemaid.—

"I could not have supposed the
hussy capable of such conduct!" sai
"I hope, my dear, you mean to pla
father on his guard? If the story
get wind, her character would be go
ever!"—

"Gone!—It is gone *already!*" cri
Squire panting with rage. "The who
mily is disgraced. If a daughter of
had been detected in such proceedin
God is my Judge, she should not have a
life left in her, to repent with!—A
viper!—And young Mordaunt, too!

oose such a fellow as *that* for the sacrifice her credit and respectability!—To pro-ke the malediction of her family for the ke of the cotton-spinner's son!"—

Panic-struck by the sound of her parents' ices in such an extremity of excitement, or Magdalen now became breathless with notion. What had Reresby been doing?—hom had he been betraying into folly?—at the clandestine meetings at Deasmill uld be the subject in discussion, did not at st glance into her mind; so conscious was e that, had her father suspected *her* as eresby's confederate, he would have smitten r senseless to the earth.

For a moment all was confusion in her ind; and the faces of her father and mother eing averted, instead of proceeding into the oom, she leaned heavily and half-fainting gainst the open door, thanking Heaven for ne mistake of persons that had occurred.

A convulsive gasp relieving her overcharged

bosom, at length attracted the att
Mrs. Cromer.

"Here is Magdalen," said she, p
the door. "Inquire of *her*. Per
may know something about the matt

"I trust not;—for *her* sake, I trus
cried the enraged Squire. "Woe b
child of mine that would dare to
between in such a business,—woe b
I say!—If I thought Madge yonder
aiding and abetting her cousin, or
cealing her disgrace, by God Al
I would kick her out of my house!"

Even Mrs. Cromer was shocked
violence. Even Mrs. Cromer seemed
he was going too far,—perhaps, be
daughter had staggered to a chair,
sitting with her eyes fixed upon the
gesticulations, in a state bordering
lepsy.

"Magdalen is incapable of co
foolish or so wicked!"—said her

ving to pacify her husband. "Magdalen
ows as little and *wishes* to know as little of
se **Mordaunts** as we do.—Go into your own
m, my dear," continued she, assisting her
ise and reach the door, as soon as the poor
appeared a little recovered.—"I want to
k to your father."

And as soon as she had disappeared, Mrs.
mer hastened to suggest the impropriety
even alluding to a subject so heinous in
sence of a modest young girl, like her
ghter. It was not for Magdalen to learn
t such an act of turpitude as a clandestine
eting at Clemson's farm was so much as
sible.

She even prayed her husband to be more
rded in his terms and gestures, in presence
heir poor child.

"Since the death of her sisters, and par-
ularly of late," resumed Mrs. Cromer,
Madge has been so nervous and delicate,
t I cannot bear to have her agitated. If

one does but speak a little quick c
her, she startles and turn pale, and
come into her eyes for a little or n

"So much the worse. Such
always increase by indulgence!"—
Squire, morosely. "What busin
country girl to be nervous?—W
having her favouring us with hys
sently!"—

"She is our only one, now," rej
Cromer, with as much sensibility
her nature.—"We must not forget

"*One* may be as great a plagu
dozen!" cried the Squire, not per
tender drift of the observation.—
let me hear no more of such nons
to Emma, I shall communicate wh
discovered to her father, the mon
turns from Northampton. And if
don't break every bone in her ski
think very ill of his sense of duty."

"Your brother does not always

the same light that *you* do, my dear. Re-
ember the terms on which he chooses to
and with the Mordaunts!"

"As parson of the parish, I suppose, it
n't to be expected that he should run counter
a wealthy parishioner. But you don't
ppose that even Jacob looks upon Mordaunt
the light of a *gentleman?*"

"Lord Melfont does,—for he was anxious
at his son should marry the daughter."—

"The daughter is a personable girl, with
hom young Melfont fell in love; and a wil-
l man must have his way.—Such things
ve happened often enough before now.—
ord Buntingford married his washerwoman,
d Lord Robert Kildargan his cook.—But
ou cannot think so meanly of Jacob as to
ncy that, even when he finds his daughter
s been giving young Mordaunt the meeting
nong hedges and ditches, like a gipsy-wench
a parish 'prentice, he would think the matter
ended by marriage? I'm told that Mor-

daunt's father was a parish boy!—And w
ever sneaking thing Jacob may have
tempted to do about Deasmarsh, such a m
would be a thing to shame not only *him*
his kith and kin. Step into the study
cast your eye upon our family tree; and
me the Cromer that has ever demeaned
self by a connection with trade!—
grandfather, my dear, was the oldest bar
in the shire, and my mother was sister t
Robert Harbuckle.—My grandmother—"

Mrs. Cromer, who stood in as little nee
instruction in these points as in the Ch
catechism, ventured to interrupt him by
serving that "she should certainly be s
to see one of her *own* children interm
with the Mordaunts. But that as E
and her father were on terms of intimacy
the family at Deasmarsh, Jacob perhaps m
think proper to—"

"I don't know what Jacob may think
per to do—" cried her husband, burs

pen, partly with his hand and partly with his foot, the door of a room that was getting too hot to hold him,—"but this I can tell you—and I beg you will take care to have it repeated both to your daughter and niece;—that if Emma Cromer becomes the wife of a Mordaunt, never does she set foot over my doorway again!—And what's more, any one of her cousins that holds communication with her, after such a derogation, is neither son nor daughter of mine!"—

CHAPTER XI.

He frequently exposed himself and left his
worse than it was before; and the éclaircissem
monly ended in the discovery of the persons from
had received his secret intelligence.

CLARENDON'S H

Rarely did the Squire find his way
Rectory; never, unless he had some p
interest to serve.—But, in spite of hi
tion to waste a moment of the time w
felt due to his peas and beans, hi
barley, and cattle,—in spite even of
ling rain that would almost have w
Highlander, off he went that very af
to the village.—He felt it his duty to
time in making his brother uncomfort

So disturbed was his air as he pu
way into the room where Jacob was

engaged in the concoction of the morrow's sermon, that the first impulse of his host was to offer him a glass of wine.—He must be wet?—Would he have his great coat dried?—Would he not adjourn to the library, where there was a fire?—

No!—He chose to sit in his wet things. He preferred damp shoes. He wanted no luncheon. He wished to stay where he was. All he desired was to unburthen his mind, and transfer the weight where it would be more galling.

Sadly fearing that the manifest discomposure of the Squire might originate with one of his sons, of whose college irregularities rumours had reached his uncle, the kind-hearted Jacob drew towards his brother, prepared to listen with sympathy, and counsel with care;—and great indeed was his amazement on finding that the preamble concerning filial delinquencies and the curse attendant on paternity with which Mr. Cromer com-

menced his narrative, regarded him
his daughter, rather than the young
of the Hall.

Startled as he was, however, w
worst was told, his surprise arose o
the fact that a man in full possessio
faculties, like the Squire, should have
himself to be imposed upon by so sh
invention.

"You cannot surely *believe* this
history?" said he,—without so muc
cloud upon his countenance; "for, if
John, you never would have found co
tell me so coolly what, if true, wou
broken my heart!"

Mr. Cromer, who had been at unusu
to infuse an air of sympathy into his
was a little piqued at the insinuation.

"To show you *my* opinion of the
(for, after all, it is but a report, and th
of a day-labourer who may have had
of his own for inventing it,") contin

Rector, "let us refer the question instantly to my girl.—You shall hear Emma's unstudied explanation of the business—"

"No! no!—pray don't expose me to a young lady's whimpering!" said the Squire doggedly. "Quite enough to be favoured with scenes and fainting-fits at home!—My own daughter's delicate nerves are enough for *me*!"

"I think I can promise you that Emma will let you off without so much as a flood of tears," replied the fond father, with a smile.

"Then I promise you that her boldness in denying what I know from an eye-witness to be true," retorted the Squire, "won't be a jot the more to my taste!"

"At all events, since you think so seriously of the business as to have judged it necessary to communicate to me, concerning my motherless girl, what you knew would inflict infinite pain," said the Rector, more gravely, "I

must exact, my dear brother, that you
your niece an opportunity of vindicatio

And the stern manner in which he q
the room and traversed the hall t
Emma's sitting-room carried with it s
authority, that his elder brother follow
with the same silent sense of inferio
when he beheld him officiating in the r
his sacred calling at the Communion
or beside the open grave of his daughte

"My dear Emma," said the Rector,
solitary girl who was installed in the w
seat, occupied either with the needlew
her hand or in watching the dead leav
tending in eddies with the autumna
that soddened the half-withered lawn,
started up on their entrance, as if to d
the reverie in which she was surpr
"my dear Emma, have you ever, p
any pretext, or for any cause whatever,
Deasmill?"

"Deasmill?—Yes, papa!" she

still a little confused by their sudden entrance.—

"You see!" exclaimed her exulting uncle, while her father, not a whit dismayed, drew her by the arm towards the chair in which he had placed himself, while his brother was triumphantly installed on the hearth-rug.—

"And what took you there, my dear?"—

"Mrs. Clemson is an old servant of the Mordaunt family."—

Again, the Squire glanced exultingly at his brother!—

"And they all frequently visit her and take an interest in the prosperity of her little household."—

"And *you*, too, I presume, Miss Emma, take an interest in the old woman's concerns?" sneered her uncle, overjoyed at his justification.—

"I am ashamed to say that I have never thought of her since the family have been away!" replied his niece, blushing for her

neglect. "I used to go there with
and Mrs. Mordaunt. But, as the
are above the world and want for
I had no object in crossing the w
dows so late in the year. I ho
nothing has happened to either o
people?"—

It was now the Rector's turn to s
see!"—But he forbore.

"And you are ready to declare
were not at Deasmill yesterday, bet
and three o'clock?" harshly pers
uncle.—

"I did not leave the house y
uncle. We spent the morning toget
we not, papa?) making an invento
books that wanted binding."—

"Do you mean to say," resu
Squire addressing his brother, "tha
not lose sight yesterday of your dau

"Not for more than half an h
time, when people came to me o

business. And half an hour would not suffice to carry her to Deasmill and back," said Jacob, drawing his daughter still more affectionately towards him, and imprinting a kiss upon her forehead.—

"But if I *had* gone to Deasmill, papa, would there have been any harm in it?" inquired the astonished Emma.—

"Only if the scandal were true, my dear, which some mischievous knave has set about, that you went there to meet Reresby Mordaunt unknown to *me!*"

"Unknown to *you?* Have you then any objection to our meeting?" inquired the puzzled girl. "And if he wanted to see either of us, why go to Deasmill instead of coming here? If the trouble of crossing a few fields could prevent his finding his way as far as the Rectory, we are scarcely likely, papa, to indulge his laziness by meeting him at Mrs. Clemson's!"—

"You are now satisfied, I trust, of the

groundlessness of your suspicions?
Jacob, addressing his brother more
than was his wont. "I am happy
that, in my own mind, your statem
not excite so much as the shadow of
Had it been otherwise, I can scarcely
for what I might have said or done i
bution of the calumny. As it is, I ca
to limit my indignation to a request t
will dismiss from your service the s
fellow who, for some bad purpose, ha
you by wanton misrepresentations."

"On that point, I shall decide and
myself," said the Squire, buttoning
still steaming great coat, and striding
the room to seek his hat for instant
ture.—"The girl who could find cou
meet a young man clandestinely in a
habited building, is not likely to wa
to deny it."—

"Do you mean to say, brother,'
Jacob, boiling over with sudden indig

"that you do not *believe* the explanation so frankly given by my daughter?"—

The Squire made no reply. He was apparently engaged in satisfying himself of his hatmaker's address.

"I am not easily put out, John," resumed the Rector, trembling in every limb for very rage, "but there are some things that no man—that is, no *father*—can stand to hear! Don't trifle with me, therefore.—This girl," said he, placing his arm round Emma's waist, "this girl is motherless; there is no one to take her part but *me*. Reflect, therefore, before you speak again, whether you have a right to injure her by surmises for which, I pledge you my word as a gentleman and a minister of the Gospel, there is not the slightest foundation!"—

"I see no great need for reflection," was the Squire's haughty rejoinder. "Believe what you think proper; but give *me* leave to do the same."—

"Give you leave to have more fai
word of a bedger and ditcher tha
daughter Emma!"—

"Considering the company into w
have thought proper to introduce you
ter Emma"—

"Brother!" interrupted Jacob in
voice, "before words pass between
must render us enemies for life, let us
let us part quietly,—let us afford o
time for consideration."—

"Nay! If you want to make a
of it, make it and welcome!" grow
Squire, pushing open the library-d
contriving that, as he traversed the h
voice should be heard in every part
house. "Since the Mordaunts ca
this country, Jacob, you've found it
spec to stick to the cotton-spinner
me. More was to be got by hangin
Deasmarsh, than at Cromer Hall.—
often I've entered your doors within

hree years. But, as you've now as good as urned me out of them, Jacob Cromer, may God strike me dead if ever I cross your threshold again!"—

So horror-struck were both the Rector and his daughter by the coarse violence of this apostrophe, that the Squire had slammed the house-door after him and disappeared through the gate of the fore-court, before either recovered self-possession to look the other in the face.—

"My poor uncle must be out of his mind!" faltered Emma, who was the first to draw breath. "I have sometimes thought so before, when he was so violent without rhyme or reason against Deasmarsh!"—

"Out of his mind? No! he is *not* out of his mind! In *that* case I could forgive him!" ejaculated the Rector, struggling with his feelings. "But in cool blood, to advance such things against a child of mine!"—

"Dear father, compose yourself!" said

Emma, perceiving that the tears were starting from his eyes. "When my uncle comes to himself, he will feel how unjust he has been, and write you an apology."—

Jacob averted his head. He could not bear even his own dear little daughter to see how thoroughly he was cut up by such cruel conduct on the part of his brother.—

But even had the mind of the Squire been open to conviction, even had he possessed sufficient generosity to avow, *when* convicted, that he was in the wrong, no chance, at that moment, of a reaction of feeling! On his return home, he found his sons arrived from Cambridge, a couple of days sooner than he expected them; and, in the excitement of communicating to them the progress of his suits and grievances against the cotton-spinner, he lost sight of all the rest.—

The petty warfare of parish interests was fought over again and again after dinner, under the influence of the strong ale and

heady port which constituted the favourite beverage of Mr. Cromer; and when the indisposition which confined poor Magdalen to her room elicited a few expressions of regret on the part of her brothers, the Squire readily consoled them.

"Take no notice!" said he. "'Tis only one of the incalculable evils connected with Deasmarsh. My brother has espoused the cause of the Mordaunts so warmly as to cause a serious misunderstanding between us. I have made up my mind not to ever enter Jacob's house again. And Magdalen, who is fond of maundering and gossiping with her cousin, has taken the squabble to heart."—

Even to his sons, he did not choose to avow that he had hazarded a slanderous accusation against his niece, which had been distinctly disproved; not knowing that, having offences of their own to avow, and indulgence to seek, they were prepared to approve any

act short of wilful murder committed by their father.

Of poor Magdalen, meanwhile, the hours were passing miserably. Agitation of mind, supervening on prolonged exposure to weather the preceding day, had brought on a violent attack of fever; and her mother felt called upon to combat, with all the energies of her medicine-chest, a malady for which a few affectionate words would have afforded a more soothing remedy.—

She *did*, however, unwittingly afford some solace to the invalid, when visiting her chamber in the course of the evening, by replying, (when Magdalen alluded to the charges made against her cousin, with every intention of avowing all in case her father persisted in his accusation,) "Better dismiss the whole story from your mind, my dear;—better dismiss it from your mind! From what I can learn, your father was misinformed. My brother-in-law spent the whole of yesterday with his

ghter. Ralph Drewe, who raised the re-
, must have been drinking, as is often the
with him, and saw double."

My uncle then is perfectly satisfied?"

As regards Emma, perfectly!—He had a
words, I fancy, with your father. But
on account of those Mordaunts, who,
way or another, are perpetually stirring
trife in the parish."

ad poor Magdalen possessed in either of
brothers what could possibly be converted
a friend or counsellor, she would have
ted by their arrival to endeavour to
y the feud of which her indiscretion was
origin. But the young Cromers, reared
vulgar notions of self-consequence and
ing the sole interest that vivified their
otonous life at Deaswold from their father's
ous war with the "cotton-spinner," were
ell disposed as he could wish to second
aggressions. — Small as was her know-
e of the world, Magdalen had no diffi-

culty in understanding that, were she to select the present moment of general excitement for the declaration of her sentiments in favour of Reresby, some insult might possibly be offered which, between his high sense of honour and her brother's bullying disposition, could only be effaced with blood.

She determined, therefore, to wait;—to wait till she grew stronger and better able to meet reproach;—and, above all, to wait till she could secure a private interview with her kind uncle. Had such a man been her father, she had never have been guilty of the concealments that weighed so heavily on her conscience. But, even supported by his aid as a kinsman, she did not despair of making atonement and obtaining forgiveness.

The first visit of her brothers to her sick room afforded, meanwhile, some insight into the state of family politics. After Robert had demanded her congratulations on the refashionment of his dress and appearance,

ch exhibited the transition of a boor into a vell,"—a transformation about as pleasing that of a tadpole into a frog,—and hen marked his contempt of his brother's ensions by two or three growls of disgust dmirable keeping with the sullenness of otherwise handsome countenance,—the nger brother saw fit to exhibit his amended ceptions of life by exclamations against dulness of the Hall.

I always thought Deaswold the most foundedly slow place on earth!" cried he. But, if there were premiums for improve- t in stupidity, hang me if it would not t all competitors out of the field!"

The place is what it always was!" re- ted his brother, in a sulky tone. "It is that are changed, Bob. A couple of ns at Cambridge have made you fancy your- a fine gentleman."

The individual whose "gent-"ism was thus rrated, protested loudly against the charge.

"When I was a boy," argued he, though the hairs on his chin were still easy of enumeration,—"there was tolerable shooting on my father's estate.—Four days, at least, in the week, one was sure of sport.—But the railroad has cut up *that*. My father says that since the railroad was opened, his game has been gradually disappearing. And for the railroad, who have we to thank but Mr. Mordaunt!"

"You are paying Mr. Mordaunt a great compliment, Robert," said his sister mildly; "for every one admits that to the railroad is owing the present prosperity of Deaswold."

"What do you mean, Madge, by prosperity?" indignantly rejoined her elder brother. "Is the rent-roll of my father's estate increased?—Is he able to raise his rents?—Does he get a farthing a quarter more for his wheat?"—

"I allude rather to the general prosperity of the village. And the Hall has certainly become a pleasanter residence."

"A far more expensive one—if you call
at pleasanter!—As my father says, 'no-
ing so expensive as sociability.'"

"Sociability!"—cried Robert, shrugging
s shoulders. "What sociability has there
en in the neighbourhood, since that vulgar
llow set foot in it?—Mordaunt decamped
om Lancashire, only because his origin was a
ifle too well known there to be agreeable;
d that he might set up as a gentleman
ewhere."

"No thanks to him for giving the pre-
rence to Deaswold!" cried the sullen
quire-apparent.—"As we have no plague of
gine-chimneys hereabouts, I don't see why
e are to be infested by the order of people
hom engine-chimneys worm up out of the
ud!"—

"Mr. Mordaunt has done a great deal for
ır charitable institutions," meekly inter-
osed the invalid.

"Of course he has!—If rich upstarts

didn't make *that* sacrifice, Madge, what *would* they be good for?"

"There are many old families—the Settringhams for instance—who do nothing of the kind," persisted Magdalen, gravely.

"Because they have their family consequence to keep up, and can't afford it. The Mordaunts are the sort of people who only get on in the world by bestowing broken victuals on the poor, and French dishes on the rich!"

"And the rich are not slow to profit by the advantage," observed his sister; "for the first people in the county have found their way to Deasmarsh."

"No, by Jove, not *all!*"—cried Bob, consequentially shaking his head.—"The Cromers of Cromer Hall neither have nor ever *will* set foot in the temple of Mammon!"

"*I* was alluding to the Duke of G—, to Lord Orton, and Lord Longueville,—the Lord Lieutenant and county members," said his sister, thus rashly furnishing a list of per-

onages known to the Squire's family but by ame, and to himself only at the crisis of a eneral election.

"I dare say!" — retorted her brother. Turtle and venison afford as deadly a bait fine folks, as soup-tickets to paupers!"

"Let us hope that many or most of those ho show so much respect to Mr. Mor- aunt," resumed his sister, "are influenced knowing how much the pauperism of the strict has been diminished by his inter- rence. The neighbourhood is indebted to m for the railroad—"

"Planned for the benefit of his own pro- erty—."

"It *might* have been equally planned by y father—"

"My father had not sufficient parliamen- ry interest to carry it through."

"My father has had the same opportunities being acquainted with the lord lieutenant nd county members."

"Ay, but not of getting them to play into his hand! The Duke's a Whig, and the cotton-spinner a Whig; and my father, thank GOD, a stanch Tory, and plain-sailing country Squire!"—cried the indignant Squireling. "The cotton-spinner will, maybe, be member for the county himself, one of these days, —for I hear he's buying up every acre of land he can lay his hands on, and scraping his foot to those who've got acres not to be bought. Or, (who knows in these topsy-turvy times?) perhaps, we may live to see him a peer of the realm and lord-lieutenant of the shire,—with a flag flying at Deasmarsh when the family's down; and have it called Deasmarsh Castle or Deasmarsh Abbey, or some confounded nonsense or other!—A pleasant sight, eh? for Cromer Hall (established on its hill since Henry the Seventh's time,) to have to look down on such an eyesore!"—

"Admit, at least, that it is pleasanter for Cromer Hall to look down on rich plantations

nd a spreading lake, than upon the swampy
neadows and broken fences of Smith's and
Hutton's farm?" pleaded Magdalen, mis-
akenly fancying that, by such home-truths,
he was advancing the cause of the Mor-
aunts.—" Surely the air of cheerfulness and
ctivity which the creation of such a seat has
roduced in the district is—"

But her brothers refused to hear her to an
nd. The privilege of being a poor weak
irl and an invalid, did not intitle her to utter
uch heresies."

" I'll tell you what, Madge," cried Robert,
vith a swaggering air. " It won't do to have
nemies in the camp.—My uncle and his
laughter have chosen to take up with the
otton-spinner; and the consequence is that
ve have chosen to lay them down. As far as
I am concerned, not a word will I ever ex-
change with either of them. And if *you* are
unnatural enough to turn against your own
father and brothers, and follow the example

of the Rectory, egad, you must bide the consequence, and share their fate!"

"I have not turned against my father," faintly articulated Magdalen.—"I have no power to act; and even my opinion of Mr. Mordaunt's merits has never been expressed before."

"Then I promise you, you'd best keep it to yourself, both now and for ever!" cried her elder brother.—"My father's not a man to be trifled with, Madge.—And, from what I have heard him say, I'm convinced he'd make no bones of turning his back on any one of his children, girl or boy, maid or man, who sided with the blackguards at Deasmarsh!"—

CHAPTER XII.

I have consider'd well his loss of time,
And how he cannot be a perfect man,
Not being tried and tutor'd in the world.
Experience is by industry achiev'd,
And perfected by the swift course of time.
Then, tell me, whither were I best to send him?

SHAKSPEARE.

A couple of centuries ago, a Franciscan brother, travelling among the mountains of Styria, was taken ill and gave up the ghost in an obscure village, where his effects were appropriated by the innkeeper to defray the charge of his sickness and interment.

Among his belongings was a small black box, to which, in his lifetime, the deceased appeared to affix the highest value, and which consequently became the first spoil of the

cupidity of his host;—who, having locked himself into the chamber of the dead man, endeavoured to open the casket.—Ignorant of the secret of the spring-lock, he first attempted to peep into the box, by means of a little aperture, ringed with brass, inserted in the lid: when, lo! a shriek of horror summoned his whole household to his aid;—the treasure contained in the mysterious box being neither more nor less than the *Devil!*—

After a momentary glimpse of the horns and claws, the publican fell into a swoon.—

The inn was instantly deserted. Masses were said in the parish church, and messengers despatched to the Cardinal Archbishop of Salzburg, to inquire by whose hands the imprisoned fiend should be conveyed to Rome, to be delivered into the custody of his Holiness.—

Luckily, the head covered by the Cardinal's hat was as wise as it was pious. Instantly surmising that the Franciscan friar

was a naturalist, and the casket the then rare instrument familiar to us as the microscope, his Eminence despatched his secretary to the spot; to put an end to the exorcisms, and demonstrate to the simple population of the village that what they had mistaken for a devil was a harmless insect, whose feet and antennæ were magnified into horns and talons!—

By just such a process of magnification did the ignorance of Cromer Hall distort into monstrosity the simplest sayings and doings of the owner of Deasmarsh. Regarding as a state of virtue and beatitude the stagnation his activity had exploded, unconscious that movement and publicity are the soul of the century we live in, they did not *pretend* to believe, but actually *believed*, that evil intentions lurked at the bottom of all his beneficence.

"For some bad purpose worthy of his origin, the Man of Capital was trying to corrupt

the morals of the people by an insidious affectation of charity.

"When the dreadful day arrived for the outbreak of popular violence, which all thinking people knew to be surreptitiously preparing, the Duke and Lord-lieutenant and county members would open their eyes and perceive what they had been about, in consorting with one whose mind was a powder-magazine."

The stoves of the French cook, and the flag-staff into which the conductor affixed to the offices of Deasmarsh was metamorphosed, were not the worst offence of the new place. It was "a hotbed of sedition—a volcano slumbering for a time the better to discharge its fatal missiles, till, some day or other, the burning emissions would set the whole county in flames!"

Such were the ravings of the Squire, whenever he could obtain an auditory among the *dii minores* of the neighbourhood, consisting chiefly of the Northampton pettifogger, at

whose suggestion he waged his pounce and parchment warfare with Mordaunt, Ghrimes, and Co.,—two elderly spinsters of noble family, residing at a cottage of gentility in the adjacent village of Basinghill, who, shaken off as bores by their relations, were glad to enjoy an occasional orgie of weak tea and weaker talk at Cromer Hall; and a dull, formal Mr. Aristobulus Settringham, a cousin-german many times removed of Sir William, who, having officiated in his youth as secretary of legation to some infinitesimal German court, and given himself, on the strength of it, for the last fifty years, the airs of a diplomat, applauded as oracular the foolish sayings of the only man whose ignorance could be induced to treat him as a retired ambassador.

To Miss Moulsey and Miss Araminta Moulsey, who were as nervous as is customary with elderly spinsters dieted on tracts and saline draughts, Mr. Cromer's denunci-

ations conveyed serious uneasiness; and but that the attorney and old Aristobulus were at hand to satisfy them that the yeomanry cavalry of the county was still in commission, and that the assizes and episcopal visitations held their course, they would probably have been driven to emigration.

The meagre hospitalities at Cromer Hall, that led to these oracular displays of the Squire, being of rare occurrence, it was not such intimations of his continued animosity to the name of Mordaunt that Magdalen had most to fear. But her brothers were untirable in their attacks. There never passed a day, scarcely an hour, without some provoking allusion to the cotton-spinner.

With all due allowance, however, for their mortification at being crossed on the road by young Mordaunt, mounted on his fine hack, while they either trudged through the mud or jogged along on some brute as vicious as themselves, for which the Squire was unable

to obtain a market,—and seeing, whenever business took them to the railway-station, packet upon packet delivered to the Deasmarsh carters from noted gunsmiths, saddlers, cutlers, fishing-tackle makers, waterproof patentees—to say nothing of fashionable tailors, hatters, and hosiers—all requesting their wares to be kept dry and delivered immediately to the cotton-spinner's son and heir,—Magdalen felt that Stephen and Robert ought to be a little more forbearing.

To young men reared like the Cromers, with the notion of being the first in that part of the county, it was doubtless trying to see hats respectfully raised to the handsome Reresby, not only in the by-ways of their village but the highways of Northampton, while *they* skulked by unnoticed. But as this arose from the natural progress of the times rather than from assumption on the part of the Mordaunts, it was not fair to visit the mortification upon *them*.

She clothed her remonstrances, nevertheless, in the meekest language. But, whenever, either singly or together, her brothers were longer absent than usual from the Hall, the moments seemed to fall like droppings of molten lead; so persuaded was poor Magdalen that, sooner or later, these two violent young men would stimulate each other to some open demonstration of insolence towards one who, much as he would doubtless bear for her sake, was not to be insulted with impunity.

Sometimes, when follies and disgraceful connections of which she dreamed not, though within limit of the village, or some feigned errand, such as the pretence of wild duck shooting at a farm possessed by their father on the confines of Huntingdonshire, detained them from home, nothing would drive from her mind but that the report raised by Ralph Drewe had reached their ears, and that they had pursued their inqui-

ries at Deasmill till all had come to light! Already, perhaps, they had demanded explanation of Reresby!—Already, some hostile encounter might be arranged!—

Such were the ever-present anxieties of that gentle nature! The suddenness of her brother's arrival had forestalled those arrangements with Reresby, touching their future correspondence, which might have relieved her mind. Communication with *him*, either in person or by letter, was out of the question now that both were under the personal inquisition of their families; and never was fairy princess, however dragonishly guarded, more impossible of access than the Squire's daughter at the top of her dreary hill. A messenger could not have reached her nearer than the park-palings without detection.

It was only on the Sabbath—it was only when the two families, so unchristianly inimical, were gathered together under the roof of the House of God,—that the conscience-

stricken girl enjoyed the happiness of knowing that she breathed the same atmosphere with him to whom she had pledged her faith. Even then, the consciousness of her fault prevented her enjoying, as Reresby did, the momentary glance that, however blameful the impulse sanctioning its sacrilegious joy, satisfied him of the presence of her for whom he would have renounced his happiness in this world and inheritance in the next.

Meanwhile, the return of the Mordaunts to their charming home, was as satisfactory as is usually the case where there exists no drawback on the conscience or the purse. Served by first-rate tradesmen and first-rate domestics, Mr. Mordaunt found his orders punctually obeyed during his absence. Though winter was come, the produce of spring and summer awaited his arrival. For the Christmas party about to assemble under his roof, the magic of wealth had worked its usual wonders.

But, to the master's eyes, *this* was not the pleasantest aspect of Deasmarsh. It was not even the satisfactory report of his land-steward and bailiffs that caused so exulting an expression to glitter in the eye of the Man of Capital, when seated once more at the head of a board so differently served from that he had left behind. He was happy—*how* happy!—In the course of the following week, the son whom he so loved,—the son who was likely to reflect such honour on the name he bore,—the son who, though he had taken first-class honours at the University, was as little of a pedant as his plain-spoken father, was to assume his seat in Parliament, and with prospects that caused his excellent father's heart to sing for joy!—

"I congratulate you, my dear boy!" said he, when the disappearance of Mrs. Mordaunt and her daughter after dinner, on the day of his arrival at home, left them to the discussion of an excellent bottle of claret, such as,

out of compliment to the tastes or prejudices of his quondam partner, old Freshley, he had abjured for many weeks past, "I wish you a thousand times joy!—After all, the little wife to whom I have been looking forward with such anxious feelings, turns out exactly what we could wish. Never did I see a more charming little girl."

Without a suspicion to what little wife, or what little girl, his father might be alluding, poor Reresby, whose thoughts were dedicate to one who had the form of a grace, but the height and port of a muse, involuntarily glanced towards the silver claret pitcher; wishing, for once, that its opacity did not prevent his ascertaining to what amount the disappearance of the fragrant Château Latour that glowed within accounted for the strangeness of his companion.—Mr. Mordaunt's wits seemed to have taken leave of him.

"Your mother and sister have always endeavoured to raise misgivings in my mind,"

continued the happy father, little dreaming to what conjectures he was giving rise. "They were afraid that, educated as she has been, she might turn trivial and vulgar,—above all, self-sufficient and overbearing. So far from which, I never saw a more humble-minded little creature. Instead of the heiress of hundreds and thousands, you might fancy her the parson's daughter of Deaswold!"—

"Of whom are you talking, my dear father?"—inquired Reresby,—the imputation of vulgarity instantly bringing the Freshleys to his mind; and with them, horrible surmises of the truth.

"Of the girl who will make you the happiest of men, and enable you to do credit to a position to the duties of which you are by anticipation devoting yourself!"—said Mordaunt, again filling his own glass and that of his son. "By marrying Claudia Freshley, my dear boy, you will be able to start in London with an income of between five and six thou-

sand a year. And from all I have seen of the world, Reresby, I am compelled to admit that a man never takes a superior place in public life, who is poorly off in private."

"Do you mean, sir," said Reresby, every vestige of colour suddenly forsaking his cheeks,—"that, without the slightest warning, you have planned a marriage for me?—that you have chosen a wife as you negociated for my seat in parliament?"—

"You speak, my boy, as if you almost fancied yourself ill used by having a hundred thousand pounds thrust into your pocket!" rejoined his father, a little astonished.

"Not *ill* used,—but injudiciously used; if, as I almost fear, you have taken serious steps in this matter," replied Reresby, in a steady voice.

"I don't know what you mean by *serious* steps.—Marriage-settlements cannot be executed without your signature. Nor can any one promise and vow in your name, as at your

baptism, that you will love poor little Claudia for richer for poorer, for better for worse.—But it is now more than three years since Freshley proposed the match to me; when I answered that, if it could be brought about, it would have my warmest consent."

"*If* it could be brought about," added Reresby,—in a less assured tone.

"And from that day to this," added his father, "I have looked forward with the most earnest desire to the accomplishment of our project."

"Three years!—yet, till this day, to give me no intimation of your wishes! And I, who fancied that your whole heart was open to me!" exclaimed Reresby, in a tone of deep emotion.

"The heart of one individual is never *wholly* open to another; as no one, my dear son, knows better than yourself!" rejoined Mr. Mordaunt. "There is always some corner or another doubled down,—for discretion sake,

or in *justice* to the claims of other people. The most confiding parent or candid friend has a right to choose for his disclosures the moment he believes to be most advantageous to the accomplishment of his wishes."

Young Mordaunt replied only by a groan.

"If I abstained from discussing this most eligible connection with you previous to your starting on your travels," resumed Mr. Mordaunt, "it was that you might view the world with an unshackled eye. I wished you to feel perfectly free. While you were away, I watched your letters with anxiety, to detect the slightest indication of a preference in the countries you were visiting; and your lively allusions to black, brown, and fair, afforded me a sufficient guarantee that you were heart-whole.—On your return, I cross-questioned you, and was still at ease. But, lest my wishes should mislead me, I even wrote to your friend Sir Herbert Glynne, inquiring whether there were any drawback abroad

to your forming a happy English marriage."

"And even Glynne never let me into the secret!"

"No secret was confided to him. So much, in fact, was he deceived, that I am satisfied he fancied, on arriving here, that my matrimonial scheme referred to the little girl at the Rectory,—a match wholly unsuited to you in every respect."

"What led you to think so?"

"The interest with which he regarded her. It may not have occurred to *you*, who were indifferent on the subject. But I promise you that for many days after his arrival at Deasmarsh, he was perpetually watching Emma Cromer, to determine whether she were worthy of his friend."

"And why, oh! *why*, my dear father, did you not undeceive him and tell him the truth!" cried Reresby.

"Because we were still uncertain of

Claudia. Your mother was anxious that nothing should be irrevocably decided till she was grown up and we could be personally satisfied of her qualification to do honour to your name. But now that she finds her all we could wish, — pretty, good-humoured, devoid of pretension—"

"Yes, yes!—I see!—a Manchester Miss—with white teeth,—rosy cheeks,—and cherry coloured ribands,"—cried young Mordaunt, impatiently shrugging his shoulders.

"You do not estimate at a *very* high rate, Reresby, the taste of your mother!"

"At all events, sir, I hope that, in the warmth of her enthusiasm for this Lancashire heiress, she may not have gone so far as to apprize *her* of your scheme?"—

"When women get together, it is hard to say where their confidences begin and end," replied his father, a little relieved. "Claudia and Matilda appeared so perfectly to understand each other, that I conclude it was

with the prospect of becoming sisters-in-law."

"How unfair, — how unkind, — to write with such apparent unconcern about this girl's beauty and improvement, without giving me the smallest clue to—"

"Find no fault with your sister on that score, my dear boy!" interrupted Mr. Mordaunt. "It was by my express desire that no hint was afforded you. In affairs of the heart, I know the contrariety of human nature. Certain loves, like certain flowers, will not flourish under culture. If touched by the hand, they wither."

"Metaphors are deceitful arguments, my dear father," was the grave reply of poor Reresby. "The best way of dealing with rational beings, is by appealing to their reason. Had I been acquainted with your wishes, I should have been on my guard against forming other attachments."

"You *have* formed other attachments,

then?" demanded Mr. Mordaunt, with a sudden contraction of countenance.

"I have."

"And it was perhaps on that account you objected to accompanying us into Lancashire?"

"It was."

"The object of your attachment resides, then, in this neighbourhood?"—continued Mr. Mordaunt. "I might have guessed it!—All the vexations of my otherwise prosperous life,—all the briars entangling my pleasant path,—are fated to spring from the same hateful source!—Those confounded—those contemptible Cromers!"—

Reresby sat silenced. Intemperance of speech was a thing so unusual with his father, that he judged it better not to aggravate him by self-defence.

"A race of insignificant people," resumed the angry man, "without energy to distinguish themselves from the clods from which

they derive their subsistence! A race which has clung to the soil of Deaswold like the oak-apple to its oak,—only to deteriorate the parent stock:—poor, without talent or spirit to enrich themselves;—obscure, without containing within themselves the germ of ennoblement;—unable to advance either their own interest or those of their dependents; and still more incapable of extending their ideas or even their desires to the advancement of the country or amelioration of the human race!"

Still, his son answered not a word. For some such expansion of indignation he was fully prepared.

"After all I have achieved for my children, I had surely a right to form ambitions for them!" resumed Mordaunt, as if reconcentrating his thoughts aloud. "Mine is not a fortune lazily transmitted from sire to son, by hands too inert to do more than clench their hereditary havings. *I* have *worked* for

all I enjoy;—worked with my ha
worked with my head:—been astir
sun and wakeful in the watches of th
—which intitles me, I think, to exa
thing in exchange for the situation
I elevate my successors. Yet yo
wantonly refuses the hand of a yo
devotedly attached to her, the repre
of one of the first houses in the
and of high and unblemished c
simply because his way of entering
and making a bow does not t
fancy!"—

"Matilda, then, has again refused
Melfont?" inquired young Mordaunt

"Again, and in terms so decid
close the door against all renewa
suit;—nay, I fear, to cut short al
intimacy between the families."

"George Melfont is a worthy c
said Reresby, glad to have attained
on which he had courage to open

'but not exactly calculated to engage a woman's eye."

"Her eye?"—cried Mr. Mordaunt, in a rage —"Where is the use of such an understanding as Matilda's, if her affections depend on mere extrinsic advantages? George Melfont is upright, honourable, well-affectioned. Independent of his noble position, he would have made her an excellent husband."

"Not if she could not bring herself to *like* him, my dear father!" argued Reresby, with firmness. "A romantic passion may not be indispensable to the happiness of married life. But repugnance is an insuperable obstacle. Be candid with yourself.—Would the laborious life you have led have been supportable, had you not been married to a woman to whom you were fervently attached? Or, would your present state of prosperity possess half its charm, were it not shared by her with whom you have passed hand in hand through life,—the object of your unshackled

choice, and consequently of your cont
love and veneration?"

"Do not cite your mother as an exa
Reresby," said old Mordaunt, with deep
ing. "There is not such another wom
the world! To bring *her* name into
tion is profanation. Lay not your ha
the ark of the covenant!"

"Just so, would I fain speak to m
children of my wife!" cried his son, with
enthusiasm;—"which could never be th
sir, were my domestic affections wi
by an interested and distasteful marriag

"And do you imagine, then, that,
the charm of youth and prettiness is
there will be anything in the little wh
childfaced daughter of our good Rec
excuse the want of fortune and want o
sideration that will weigh down int
thingness the best years of your life
perhaps induce you to look forward
death as a term of enlargement?"—

Mr. Mordaunt, with a look of pity and disgust.

"The daughter of the *Rector?*"—exclaimed Reresby, in his turn, in a tone of such unfeigned amazement that his father saw in a moment there was some misunderstanding between them.

"Why, did you not just now tell me that you were reluctant to accompany us into Lancashire, because the object of your preference resided hereabouts?"

Reresby was affirmatively silent.

"And to whom *but* Emma Cromer could you allude? I will not believe, Reresby, that you have derogated to some person of whom your education and habits of life render you the superior. You can scarcely have taken a fancy to one of those old Moulsey hags at Basinghill. And whom else, is there, betwixt this and Northampton?"

To Mr. Mordaunt's great surprise, his son hesitated to reply.

"With the family at Cromer Hall, t
to Heaven," said the old man fervent
have no acquaintance! For, sooner
you united to the offspring of so muc
nity, intolerance, meanness, and prid
Almighty hears and judges me, I wo

"My dear, *dear* father," interru
resby, rising and throwing his arm
his father, as he would have don
boyish days, "spare me a hasty den
such as we could never recall!—Be
ing!—Do not drive me to extremitie
not in your usual tender mercy, a
never, dear father, *never* fail in my d

"It *is* then the daughter of the
has spat upon your father, and end
to trample your family into the
whom you have attached yourself?"
Mordaunt, utterly overcome.

"It *is* the daughter of Mr. C
Cromer Hall,—a being as different
odious father as—"

Instead of proceeding, Reresby Mordaunt was forced to relinquish his hold upon *his*, whose struggles to release himself from his son's embrace had suddenly ceased, and snatch a glass of water from the table to hold to his lips.—The strong man was reduced to the weakness of a woman.—Tears glittered in his eyes.—His pale lips quivered with emotion.—With much difficulty he struggled with his feelings, so as to escape utter unconsciousness.

"Not another word to-night, dear sir, I beseech you!" said his son, who had never before seen him so deeply affected.—"We are neither of us in a state for argument. Give me your hand, dearest father, as an assurance that you cherish no rancour against me."—

Mr. Mordaunt silently extended his hand. It was plain that the anguish within was too bitter for words.

"And in return, accept my promise," continued his son, pressing that venerated hand

fondly between his own,—"that I
no step in this matter without p
consulting you.—Nothing, sir, bel
has occurred that ought to shake
fidence between us."

"Not when you placed in the han
only enemy a sword to drive into my
faltered poor Mordaunt—still ghas
the effects of the shock.

"As yet, not a single human being
ing Magdalen and myself, is aware
has passed.—Old Cromer knows not
as that we are acquainted."

"Then there is still hope!"—was t
ejaculation of the unhappy father.
was no longer slow in placing his han
of Reresby, while acceding to his e
that all further discussion of the
should be deferred till to-morrow.

CHAPTER XIII.

Eftsoons, both flower and garland far away
She flung, and her faire dewy locks yrent,
To sorrow huge she turned her former play,
And gamesome mirth to grievous detriment.
SPENSER.

The morrow brought mutual explanations, which, if less stormy, were scarcely less unsatisfactory. After narrating his accidental introduction at the Rectory to Jacob Cromer's niece, it was difficult for Reresby to account for the rapid growth of intimacy between them without compromising, in the eyes of his father, the delicacy and discretion of her whom he was pledged to make his wife. As far as possible, he took upon himself the blame; spoke of his chance meetings with Magdalen in her daily walks, and even of his intrusions into the grounds at Cromer

Hall. But of Deasmill, he said not
Avowals which would probably have
Mr. Mordaunt that the honour of his
irrevocably pledged, were injudicious
held.

In the conviction, therefore, that
was touched only by the romance
moment, and that a prepossession
formed would be as rapidly surmount
prudent father exacted that Reresb
grant a year's trial to the strength o
ment.

"If at the expiration of a twelv
said he, "you still assert a marri
Mr. Cromer's daughter to be essentia
happiness, my consent, however re
granted, shall not be wanting."

At a sentence so much more leni
he had anticipated, the sanguine yo
was beginning to expand into raptu
pressions of gratitude; when his fath
what drily interrupted him.

"Do not thank me too soon!" said he. "My concession is not unconditional. Under any circumstances, my dear boy, you would have quitted Northamptonshire next week; having to show yourself at Castle Dangan, preparatory to taking your seat at the meeting of Parliament. But, as matters stand, I shall require you to start for town to-morrow by the mail-train. Notwithstanding my causes of enmity against Mr. Cromer, I feel it my duty as a father to interdict all further intercourse between you and his daughter, till you are able to go straight to her parents, like an honest man, and ask them for her hand."

"All further intercourse, *even by letter?*"

"If you are wise, even by letter! For, should your clandestine correspondence fall into the hands of the family, so far from sanctioning the marriage they might exact as an *amende honorable*, I should absolutely refuse my consent. You will, therefore, I

conclude, perceive the wisdom of f
ance."

In vain did Reresby attempt to ple
cause of Magdalen.—For Mr. Cromer's
ter, Mordaunt found no pity in his hea

"Don't talk to me about her deli
feeling!" cried he. "You have knov
other, Reresby, but a couple of mo
The whole affair is a romantic adv
such as every now and then befal
young man of your age, who finds a
girl imprudent enough to listen to
dresses.—No, no! Miss Cromer's a
cannot be *very* deeply engaged."

Reresby of course thought otherwi
plausible enough were the argume
which he strove to convince his fatl
she who had confided her happiness
keeping was a girl of no ordinary n
no common strength of mind.

"Let her prove it!" was Mr. Mo
rejoinder. "I shall require some lit

dence of the fact before I reward her with the hand of such a son as mine. If her love for him will not hold out against a year's absence—"

"And cessation of correspondence," interrupted Reresby in a lower voice.

"—it is not worth the suing for!" added his father. "Meanwhile, she suffers no injury at your hands. The abrupt termination of your clandestine courtship is a benefit rather than otherwise; and as no one is aware that you are so much as acquainted, no slight will be thrown upon her by your departure."

"At all events, my dear father," said young Mordaunt with deep feeling, "promise me to respect her secret—even as regards her uncle—even as regards my mother?"

"Even as regards your mother!" solemnly responded his father.

"And that, should chance throw you together, your manner towards Magdalen will

denote no resentment of what h
curred?"

And again, the prudent father
him by complete acquiescence; after
what more was to be urged—what
be argued? All that remained for th
man was to hasten his departure.
convict, he was perhaps in hopes of
his period of punishment abridged by
submission and good conduct.

To convey furtively a letter of exp
to Magdalen, now that her brothers
the Hall and like other idle country
men perpetually on the prowl, was ou
question. Even the one he entruste
Mrs. Clemson, to be delivered sooner
as occasion presented itself, would
never reach its destination! But to
more than this hazardous despatch, h
an infringement of his compact v
father.

As young Mordaunt cantered al

alley dominated by Cromer Hall, on his ay to the Station the following day, never ad that staring ungainly structure looked alf so offensive in his eyes as now, when its nean self-sufficiency, the origin of all his oes, seemed to look down exultingly upon is departure!—

So true, alas! to the grievous contrarieties of human fortune is the axiom of La Bruyère, that "the things of which we are most desirous never come to pass, or come to pass at a time and under circumstances that rob them of half their charm!" For Reresby Mordaunt, for whom every thing connected with his entrance into Parliament had once assumed an all-absorbing interest, was literally proceeding to his borough with his pockets heavy with corruption to secure his return, and his heart heavier than his pockets.

On the other hand, upon hearing the railway shriek announce the departure of the train that conveyed him away, that of his

father became inexpressibly lighte
get him safe off was something; a
the contending passions of two you
were principles of action with whi
himself incompetent to deal, Mr.
was not the man to sit fretting ove
not altogether hopeless.

His first care was to ask of the
the same concession he had require
son,—*viz.*, a year's patience.

"It was desirable," he said, "
tyro in parliamentary life should no
time bespoken, in the onset of his
reer, by those duties of domestic l
he should think ill of Reresby if h
for a time find all in all.—A year h
new member would be at better lei
honeymoon."

And while eagerly awaiting a rep
only Jesuitical epistle he had ever i
his life,—a letter such as nothing bu
tion that the well-being of his famil

volved in the fruition of his plans, would have induced him to write,—he took occasion to hint to Mrs. Mordaunt and Matilda, as a first step towards still further estrangement from the Cromers, his desire that the closeness of their connection with the Rectory might be, in some degree, modified.

For this apparent inconsistency of purpose, politics afforded a ready pretext.

"The contentions of political life," said he, "are likely to become of too stirring a nature for a Liberal like myself, and a Conservative like my good friend the parson, to meet over their wine without something as nearly amounting to a squabble as the colour of his cloth will admit. And now that Reresby's doings are about to be added to my sayings, and that my son's name will be seen daily in the list of those whom the worthy Jacob does not hesitate to treat of as enemies to Church and State, we are not likely to come to a better understanding."

His proposal found ready acq
Emma was no longer the helpless
girl in whose favour, on arriving
marsh, Mrs. Mordaunt had made it
feel interested; nor was Matilda s
relieved from hollow demonstration
will towards one whom she regard
successful rival with Sir Herbert G

To fulfil the wishes of Mr. Mord
out offering offence to the man who
ness as a parish priest was as fully
by the family as though his politics
less narrow and his connection wi
Hall less close, was not difficult. T
had always conditioned to be invite
marsh when the family was alone; a
party was shortly afterwards to
under its hospitable roof precisely o
he was disposed to avoid.

A single Sabbath intervened;
Mordaunt, albeit usually a devout
at divine service, could not ref

glancing across the chancel towards the pew occupied by the family of the lord of the manor, in order to form some estimate of the amount of his son's danger, and of Magdalen Cromer's charms.—He even experienced something almost amounting to a quickened pulsation of heart, at the idea of being perhaps about to look face to face on his future daughter-in-law.

But his emotions were thrown away. No Magdalen was there. Her father, in pursuance of his unbrotherly resentments, had hit upon what *he* considered the greatest insult in his power to offer to his brother, by transferring to the adjacent parish of Basinghill the seat of his devotion. Having issued an ukase commanding his sons and servants not to set foot in Deaswold Church again without his especial sanction, he profited by the permission often pressed upon him by the Miss Moulseys to take possession of the right wing of the long rambling pew railed and wain-

scoted with carved oak, in which the
were accustomed to enjoy their wee
bers, and cultivate their annual lumb

When Mr. Mordaunt looked
about him, therefore, at Deaswold
pectations were frustrated. The Cr
pew, above which, aforetime, the
of the little Cromers were seen to cl
strawberries piled over a pottle, an
since the return of the family fro
lacked the presence of the lovely g
mourning weeds were less black
raven braids that enframed a brow a
as her broad-hemmed lawn, was as
a poor-box !—

For poor Emma to have lost sigh
of the two objects dearest to her on e
fickle Romeo of Deasmarsh and th
Magdalen who was dearer still, — w
enough to refrigerate her devotions
had her intended ostracism from D
been whispered at that moment

ear, she would scarcely have given it a thought.

Nothing more common in this world of grumbling and discontent than to hear people rail against the abuses of society or the dulness of daily life, without taking heed how much of the blame rests with themselves. What, for instance, would the squatters in the Prairies, repining after intercourse with their kind,—what would the wanderers in Australia,—what would the solitary English Rajah of Samarák say to the unchristianly and unsocial feeling evinced by three opulent English families, like those of Deaswold, settled in a beautiful rural district, blessed with promising children and excellent health, who, instead of loving one another, each as himself,—instead of doing to each other each as he would be done by,—instead of intercommunicating with cheerful sociability for the general good,—abided in their several homes, sullen, alienated, and resentful!—

The traveller skimming that ha
and beholding the chimneys of
Cromer Hall, and the Rectory, smo
the trees, would scarcely have cre
inhospitable estrangement; so ple
the frame of the fair landscape
unite into one community the ma
prietor, the wealthy trader, and th
whose instruction and guidance th
find one common path through th
duties of this world to the frontier
land.

But is this bitterness of rare oc
civilized life? Even among the chil
mother, do not strifes and envyings to
vail? Alas! it needs no *very* extens
through the best legislated countr
to find as many country neighbou
tracted like Deaswold by private
petty factions, as, in more he
would have supplied *virus* for t
Troy!—

The disunion of the neighbourhood was, however, happily imperceptible to the gay party assembled by the Mordaunts for Christmas holidays. To the London guests, indeed, it was a relief to find the house unincumbered with country neighbours; and even Sir John and Lady Mary Grovynor Grovynor, who, inhabiting the further extremity of the county, had a vague notion (such as it becomes a well-estated baronet and county member to derive from assiduous study of his county history) that the manor of Deaswold pertained to an ancient family of the name of Cromer,—obtained for answer to their inquiries only that the present representative of the family led a life of complete seclusion; and as, after the laudable custom of Deasmarsh, the party assembled on the Monday was to disperse on the Saturday following, in order that the sabbath observances of the family might undergo no infringement, there was no chance of awkward ques-

tions concerning the Rector and h
ter.

The Grovynors, who, on beco
quainted with the Mordaunt famil
Melfont's, had been so captivate
open manners and clear-mindedne
novus homo as instantly to invit
Grovynor Chase, were enchanted, n
with all they heard and saw in his we
domain. Practical people, and piqu
selves upon being, in the best sen
word, "children of the century,"
proving their affiliation by the ado
jargon, half-slang, half-foreign, and
serpent-charmers of the East, eliciti
spirit from things innocent and ha
the baronet and his patrician dame
themselves in applying to the benefi
property, and embellishment of their
every improvement and innovation o

Their only fault was, that they
spiriting a little too fussily. Lady

a dreadful "manager;" and her new systems worked as stiff at Grovynor Chase as the machinery of a new pantomime. Thanks to her anxiety to do things better and quicker by patent process than other people,—to eat her strawberries a day earlier and her green peas a month later,—to light the fire in her drawing-room by instantaneous-ignition-fuel, and communicate between the housekeeper's room and kitchen-garden by means of an electric telegraph,—it was as dangerous to spend a few days at the Chase as to inaugurate a railroad.

The Settringhams, on the other hand, who, in the true spirit of their order, regarded the taste for patent improvements exhibited by Mordaunt as a disease peculiar to new people and manufacturers, were inexpressibly startled at finding a baronet of 1666 suffering from the infection; and it was as much as Sir William Settringham could do, when alone with Sir John Grovynor Grovynor, to abstain

from asking him whether he had
malady naturally, or by inoculation

The old gentleman had in fact sc
the turrets of Settringham Abbey
over his head, since he heard of t
brass dogs at the Chase giving place t
stoves, and tons of Wenham Lake
deposited in a Great British ice-ho
it was something very like fear les
tagion his nature had resisted from
spinner should be more readily com
by a brother-baronet, which ca
Sir William to fill his gloomy old ma
Christmas visitors, as a pretext for
the more brilliant conclave at Deas

Guests, however, were not wanti
whose names the daily papers deligh
ing in their columns, as interesti
vulgar eye or embalmed in the pu
The party was not composed, after
of Christmas parties, of learned pu
like Cuvier, when shown the tooth

diluvian animal, can describe and reconstruct even the minutest articulation of the entire beast, and go the whole mastodonton; or conversation-men, who put down their puns and witticisms for Christmas consumption as East India purveyors preserve Dorking fowls and sirloins of beef in the Strand to be eaten fresh at Hong Kong,—invited to divert the leisure of the noble lords whom it is their pride and glory to entertain;—royal highnesses delighting in musical prodigies, or musical prodigies who tune up their bravuras, or commit some other harmonious nuisance only at the solicitation of royal highnesses;—or lounging honourables, with portfolios of caricatures filled at the cost of successive country visits, with the snobs of Hertfordshire villas or cits of Surrey hunting-boxes, set down in malice for the diversion of the lordly parks of Yorkshire, *à charge de revanche*;—or noble blocks from the clubs, prepared to take off a photographic facsimile of the company,

to be circulated gratis in St. James's St
on their return to town.—The little g
consisted of men of high personal distinc
—connected with Mr. Mordaunt by the ac
ties of public life or interests of comme
speculation;—of whom chancellors of
Exchequer seek audiences as often as
are solicited to grant them to other peopl

"I wonder where the seven-leagued b
of this cotton-spinning rascal will stop!"
claimed the Squire's younger son one even
beside the meagre tea-table of Cromer H
with its Wedgwood service of blue and w
crockery, and teapot of silver paper, on w
the Cromer arms were pompously engr
on a mantle large enough for the state co
of the Lord Mayor. "Hilshere, the turnp
man, told me this morning that no fewer
seven carriages and four had passed thro
to Deasmarsh since Christmas-day!"—

"Much good may they do the fello
was the surly rejoinder of the Squire.

should be sorry to pay for the commons of such locusts. But new people are apt to think the company of fine folks cannot be bought too dear."

"It seems odd, however," observed the eldest son, "that, with such families as the Grovyno Grovynors, and Lord and Lady William Apreece, and the Solicitor-General, and Archdeacon Harris, and I know not who besides, staying at his father's house, the young Marquis of Flue (as Aristobulus Settringham calls young Mordaunt) should choose to be away from home."

"Considering 'tis the first Christmas he's been in England since Deasmarsh was finished, it *is* rather strange," rejoined his mother, not noticing that poor Magdalen was filling a cup of tea for her father out of the tea-urn instead of the teapot.

"You and Stephen give pretty plain proof that you never read the newspaper!" sneered the Squire, who seldom allowed the London

papers to escape out of his study
were a week old (as though the ec
dieting his family on stale bread had
him with a notion that anything b
news must be wasteful.) "As long
the Standard of Tuesday last," wh
still safe under the mohair cushio
library-chair! "you might have lea
young Mordaunt has just been pit
into Parliament."

"Into parliament?—with scarcel
on his chin!" exclaimed the demu
Cromer, whose notions were ground
the gray-bearded representatives of h
county — the only members on wh
eyes had ever rested.

"Now-a-days, *young* members
fashion!" retorted the Squire, with
bitterer sneer, "as any one might g
the measures they foist upon the
Young England, as it calls itself, is
up its ears,—and pretty long ones t

and I suppose this young sprig of a cotton-spinner will soon be adding *his* hee-haw to the rest!"

"I thought I understood, sir, from my uncle Jacob, that Mr. Mordaunt's politics were liberal?" interposed Magdalen, who certainly understood nothing very clearly at that moment—so overjoyed was she at this explanation of an absence which, for a fortnight past, had not a little increased the redness of her eyes and hollowness of her cheeks.

"*Radical*, you mean!—Mordaunt would be a Chartist and Socialist, if it wasn't for the thousands he has managed to scrape together. Mordaunt is democrat to the backbone! But it does not follow that the gosling should cackle in the same gamut as the gander. The Gazette announced him as returned for the borough of Castle Dangan, in that part of the united kingdom called Ireland. Now, as old Mordaunt has no connection of any sort or kind with Ireland," continued the Squire,

as dictatorially as though he were n
like an ignoramus — "depend up
young gentleman has been smuggled
liament by some of his college frien

"Mordaunt lived entirely among
when he was at Trinity," adde
Cromer. "He had the name, at C
of being quite an out-and-outer!"—

"And, ten to one, will think it
thing to cut the old cotton-spinner's
—and maybe his acquaintance," chu
elder brother, to whom the handsom
was an object of aversion.

"I could find it in my heart
him *that!*" said the Squire. "A v
right side is never to be sneezed at.

"We shall soon see!" cried Bob.
ment meets on the 20th (doesn't it, si
first political question will decide t

"Why, as the youngest memb
House, he'll surely have to move the
said Stephen, doubtingly.

"No, he won't. It's only in the House of Lords the last peer that took his seat moves the address," replied Bob, with a knowing nod.

"Stuff and nonsense!" retorted Stephen.

"But I tell you it *is* so!" cried Bob, growing as scarlet as the coat, little dreamed of by the Squire, in which, despite his clerical prospects, he occasionally figured at Cambridge. "I've heard young Hogg say so scores of times; and *he's* a member's son, you know, and must be up to the thing."

"Young Hogg's a prime blockhead!" was the polite rejoinder of his brother. And the argument was forthwith pursued between them with a degree of noise and acrimony, under cover of which, it was not difficult for Magdalen to steal out of the room, in a breathless search after Tuesday's Standard.

So suddenly deprived of all intercourse with the object of her affection, so utterly ignorant of his projects and whereabout, it was some-

thing to read his name in print, a
for the borough of Castle Dangan
those few words conveyed a certifi
existence. To be returned to
sounded to the simple-minded Mag
the top of the hill where she was
like the ark on Ararat, out of rea
striving tides of civilization, as if
she loved were taken bodily by
and placed upon a bench in the
Commons.

He *must* be well—he *must* be thrivi
a discerning constituency had found
convert him into an M.P.!—

CHAPTER XIV.

Ce n'est pas dans les momens d'énergie que l'on s'occupe des autres temps ou des autres hommes. On ne commande pas à ses idées, ou ne veut pas réfléchir, on ne demande pas à son esprit d'approfondir une matière, de découvrir de choses cachées, de trouver ce qui n'a pas été dit. On *réve*, —on ne médite point.

SENANCOURT.

He *was* both well and thriving. Whether owing to the "nine times nine and one cheer more," with which, on occasion of his new honours, his health was drunk at his father's table, not only by his own family but by the Grovynor Grovynors, the Solicitor-General, Lord and Lady William Apreece, and sundry other notabilities, and the triumph with which the same toast was echoed over its ale by the servants' hall; or whether to the contemptuous tone in which his entrance into parlia-

ment was discussed at Cromer Hal
next tea-drinking, by the Basinghill
and the soured old bachelor ambitiou
for an Excellency; — certain it w
never was Reresby Mordaunt in be
than when he entered the Travelle
arm in arm with Sir Herbert Glynn
evening of the meeting of parlia
preface his cigar with a sherry-cobb

To a man under five-and-twenty
be readily made to assume a new asp
a child who hails as permanent ev
gleam of sunshine brightening son
valley, every new object has intere
eyes. He had been presented that
to some dozen or so of desirable
ances. He had been claimed as a
quaintance by as many more school
college chums, desirous of ranking
friends. But this was not all. Th
of parliament had been brilliantly
not alone by the noble dames priv

right of peerage to witness the delivery of the speech from the throne, but by a throng of fashionable beauties, eager, at that dead season of the year, to exhibit themselves wherever admiring eyes were gathered together.

Now, though Reresby had taken his share in balls, banquets, and midnight masquerades, both in Paris, Naples, and Vienna; though he had "swum in a gondola" on the Brenta, and serenaded under the balconies of Seville, it was the first time he had been present in a numerous assembly of his fair countrywomen of the patrician order. It was the first time he had ever seen the mantling bloom of English beauty, or the guileless expression of countenance (so remarkable in the daughters of Albion), attired in satin robes and diamond tiaras, and the modest dignity of deportment more distinguishing than either. And, though he might have disowned it, even to himself, his eyes were dazzled by the spectacle.

The quiet self-consciousness of tho
tiful women imposed upon him. H
in them worthy partners for life
whose deeds are heroic or whose
tions beneficial to mankind—the gre
the kingdom, whether in the field o
They were, in short, something ab
he had yet connected in his dreams
attributes of the sex. Though
might be equally fair, he could not
himself *one* of *them* meeting him a
nettles and alder-bushes of Deasmill

As a tyro on entering a sculptor
or even the workshop of some mecha
is apt to overrate the mere dexteri
perience, the usage of the world
high-bred women appeared to his
tised eye a personal accomplishme
youthful sovereign, in all the glo
throne, and the beautiful Marchio
Viscountess in waiting, impressed
lible picture on his mind's eye.

and warriors exhibited their venerable heads in vain. All he remembered of the morning's pageant was effulgent with beauty.

"The Duke was looking very well — amazingly better than at the close of last session," observed Sir Herbert, who, though not in parliament, had been a spectator in the gallery.

But, to his surprise, considering the interest he had often heard expressed by his friend in the well-being of the veteran of Waterloo, Reresby replied by an inquiry concerning a lady he had seen taken by his friend to her carriage.

"Who was that beautiful woman in the white velvet dress?"—was his not very apposite answer.

"One whom it is not good for little boys to be acquainted with," replied Sir Herbert, with a provoking smile.

"I was not aware of much difference of age between us," was Reresby's dry rejoinder.

"Oh! *I* am safe," rejoined the
"As her cousin, I have known h
childhood!"—

"The better your right and title t
your friend," persisted Reresby, resc
to be affronted.

"It is not right and title, but in
that is wanting," replied Sir Herbe
took from the tray presented to
goblet of sherry-cobbler and its gl
while Reresby primitively adhered to
"Were you to ask me to step to Di
for a bottle of prussic acid, I should
nay, precisely for the same reason t
fuse to introduce you to Lady Belve

"It *was* then, as I surmised, the
Lady Belvedere!" exclaimed Reresb
though his friend was now too busy
pleasant absorption of his beverage
silence implied assent.

"Reresby, my boy, you are in a
to lose your wits!" observed Sir

when, at length, after discussing their several tumblers, they renewed their chat; and the new member, as if to disguise his interest in Lady Belvedere, questioned his friend concerning "the beautiful woman in the sapphire brooch,"—"the lovely girl with the white wreath,"—"the pretty creature who had shaken hands with him in the lobby." "But don't fancy I am going to connive in making a Malvolio of you. 'Talkest thou of nothing but ladies?'"

"What else *should* I talk of, seeing that we spent the morning among them?" retorted Mordaunt, smiling.

"Fetch me Dodd's Parliamentary Companion and a pencil, and I fancy I can prove that some fifteen hundred of the male species were collected under the roof of the House of Lords! That you did not perceive them, makes your danger only the more apparent. Seriously, my dear fellow," said he, lowering his voice, and speaking more gravely, "now I

find that you have not, as you used t
left your heart in the country, th
thing I dread more than to see yo
up, as so many have been before yo
sails of the windmill of fashion, an
out of all means of good to yo
others."

"No fear!" was the equally earn
of his friend. "To-day is a holi
know; but, believe me, like the in
apprentice, I have the best inte
sticking to the shop!"

"So has almost every man who
seat," rejoined Sir Herbert. "But
it is doubly incumbent.—You have r
your new duties:—you have been t
by your father. Instead of being
with Horace and Homer, *your* mind
stored with all that has been said o
concerning prison discipline, pauperis
laws, and the various valves throug
humane natures are just now emitti

philanthropy; and your head and heart ought to be nerved for action, like those of a strong swimmer about to plunge into the waves."—

"An indifferent swimmer, I fear—"

"An inexperienced,—which comes to the same thing; for inexperienced swimmers are easily discouraged. And when an enthusiast like yourself discovers how little can be done, and how slowly, in the matter of the great reforms which an enthusiast premeditates as to be accomplished like the light-bringing *fiat lux* of the Creator, he is only too apt to throw up his vocation in disgust."

"What an oaf you seem to take me for!" cried Reresby with some indignation. "Do you really fancy me so vain as to mistake the little pebble in my sling for some 'rock's vast weight,' manœuvred by an Ajax?"

"Nothing of the kind, I assure you. All I fear is, that, once alive to the personal insignificance of every member of that potent body called parliament, which like a barrel

of gunpowder is contemptible i
and mighty only as a whole, you
yourself to glide sullenly with th
the current of routine,—perform
like an automaton ; — and, liv
parliamentary men, adopt their j
their cheers, reckon the sense of
by the numbers of a division ; a
at some prating dinner-party yo
phesy to a vote the issue of th
debate, fancy that you are doing
to yourself and your constituents.

" You expect, in short, that I s
attempting too much, or too litt
shall prove myself either a prig o
whereas, my utmost pretension
zeal and industry to the task of w
the reforms devised by the wisdo
experienced and influential men.
or other, you will see me one
committee-men in the House of

" Which need not, however, p

being one of its best speakers," rejoined Sir Herbert, a little appeased. "Our debating society, I remember, used to predict great things of you; and Trinity was as proud of you as became its gray beard."

"If you had not ventured on a second cobbler, I am not sure that I should forgive your attempt to fool me to the top of my bent by these flatteries," retorted Reresby, shrugging his shoulders.

"To *fool* you? Not I. I am as serious as the Court of Queen's Bench!" cried his friend. "But I don't want you to fool yourself. As one to whom much is given, from *you* much shall be required!—I pass over the question of talent.—I pass over the question of good intent.—I will even suppose, my dear Reresby, for argument-sake, that all men who enter parliament enter it with similar qualifications. But your moral position is exceptional. You enter the House unshackled by antecedents, — unshackled by pledges,—un-

shackled by family connections, th
lumber of escutcheons, or the br
Heralds' College!—You stand or
ground: *not* as a friend of the pe
good only for the hustings or to
hazy constituents at an election-di
the friend of the country. Neve
with hands and intellects more co
his own disposal."—

"And, better still," interrupte
"backed by the counsels of a pra
like my father; who has passed
years in collating the facts no
youth;—and who knows by caref
tion the condition of our ma
towns and prisons;—things whic
together as cause and effect."

"And possessing these advantage
Sir Herbert, "and being conscious
ing them, admit that there would
don for you if, for the sake of a fe
smiles and pleasant dinner-parties,

yourself to be caught in the web of an insect, (*passez moi le mot*) like Lady Belvedere."

"Is it my weakness, pray, of which you are afraid,—or the strength of the lady?" said Reresby, a little nettled.

"Of both.—On your arrival in town, last spring, to meet me on my return to England, you disdained all proposal of introductions,—you would not hear of balls,—you scarcely even allowed yourself an opera."

"But not, I assure you, because I fancied such pleasures likely to interfere with graver duties. On the contrary, I hold with the proverb that

> All work and no ploy
> Makes Jock a dull boy."—

"I suspect I understand your motives better than you understand them yourself," rejoined Sir Herbert with a smile. "Your praises of country duplicity, and outcry against the wretched artificiality of London women, betrayed you to be in love with some

rustic Miss; nor, on visiting Deasn
seeing the damsel in question, was I
prised to find your passion-flower al
of bloom! Nothing, in fact, but the
of something to do, could excuse yo
even fancied yourself into an attacl
the parson's daughter."—

"As I live and breathe—" Re
earnestly beginning;—but Sir Herb
choose to drop the thread of his dis

"But as even a paltry camphor-l
tinued he, "acquires value as a pr
from the plague, I would rather you
the illusion, than that, finding yours
whole, you turned your freedom
account."

"To prove to you that I am in no d
Reresby was again beginning, with
tion of confiding to his friend the
his engagement to Magdalen,—whe
collection of his solemn promise to
stopped his mouth.

"To prove to you that my danger is not imminent," he again resumed—"know that were you now to offer me an introduction to Lady Belvedere, I should play the Cæsar with you, and refuse the crown."

"Don't be afraid!" cried Sir Herbert, good-humouredly, as both took up their hats for departure. "If, within the next six weeks, I make you acquainted with anything younger or more dangerous than the parchment-cheeked beldames of Settringham Abbey and Melfont Park, to whom you were generous enough to procure me a presentation, I give you leave to elope with a *figurante!*"—

"Pleasant prospects for my début in membership!" said Reresby, as he accompanied him down stairs. "The Emperors of China are required, on the day of their accession, to choose the block of marble that is to form their tomb. But hang me if I see why a new member is to have a parish pall thrown over his head, on the day of taking his seat!"

Sir Herbert, however, was not in
of "rising to explain." He had
his intentions; and abided by them.
time four and twenty hours had
however, the "hyperbolical fiend,"
caused poor Reresby to "talk of no
ladies," relaxed its influence. The
brought long and interesting letters
father; the evening, an importa
arising out of the foreshowings of the
and profound rumination succeeded
aspirings.

And very soon,—sooner than was
by either—the ex-parliamentary l
habits of Sir Herbert began to mo
intimacy. When *one* wanted recre
other wanted rest. To dine, or wa
together, was often impossible; ti
grees the baronet adhered to co
more at his disposal, leaving Reres
off with the Eton chums who, lik
constituted a part of the wisdom of t

from knowing when to cry "ay" or "no" at the instigation of his betters.

It is not with male as with female friendships. Men of the world come and go,—and see much or little of each other as they list or as accident drives them, without explanation or apology. Neither one nor other of the twain who had mounted their camels side by side in the desert was, perhaps, aware of the branching in diverse directions of their several paths; till one Saturday night after the opera, when, as Sir Herbert Glynne, while lounging on the grand staircase near the crush-room door, with two or three other men, intent, like himself, on avoiding the *corvée* of carriage-calling for neglected dowagers, he perceived that the happy man on whose arm the beautiful Lady Belvedere swept past them, ruffling her plumes in all the triumphant pride of conquest, was no other than his friend Reresby!—

"Who the deuce has Lady Bel. got hold of

to-night?" inquired Colonel Bed
sallow guardsman, weazened with
rooms of twenty seasons, and liv
midst of temptations which his mo
tune as a younger brother enabled
to taste as the children of the
fruit,—when green or mouldy.

"Some *nouveau débarqué*,—I
him before!"—replied Lord Richa
a cornet of the Blues,—in the full
handsome face and fortune. "Prol
confounded foreigner."—

"No, no! Lady Bel.'s French re
sirable to steer clear of foreigners
the sneering Colonel.

"I seem to know his face,—s
Mordaunt of Trinity?" cried Ma
Lord Richard's Shadow, as far as
mimicry of dress and manner co
the apehood; though heirship to a
Squire and ten thousand a year m
fairly entitled him to invent waist

slang for his own use.—"Here, Glynne,—my dear fellow!—Glynne!"

But Glynne was leaning over the iron baluster of the staircase, overlooking the soldiers on guard, or the progress of the brilliant couple struggling through the crowd; while cries of "The Countess of Belvedere's carriage stops the way," encouraged them to what appeared to Reresby's inexperience a task as difficult as disgusting. It was in vain that Trevor persisted in plucking him by the sleeve.

"Yes, it *is* Mordaunt!" continued the Shadow, after taking a survey through his own glass, in the same direction.

"And *who*, pray, is Mordaunt!" inquired the Colonel, with the supercilious self-possession of a man whom twenty years' experience of the *pavé* of St. James's Street endows with the imaginary sovereignty of the place.

"A capital fellow,—we were with the same tutor at Eton," replied Trevor.

"But where does he come fro
whom does he belong?"

"Nothing very particular, I fanc
Lancashire,—manufacturing interest,
thing of that kind,"—said Trevor,
cowed look of a man acknowledging
ditable acquaintance.

"Mordaunt?—There was a man
name returned the other day for so
borough,"—observed Lord Richard L

"*Ours*, for a thousand!—He was
sort of fellow to get into parliame
joined the Shadow. "Monstrous cl
prime favourite with Keate.—Gly
cried he again, on perceiving that Sir
was receding from his post of observa
buttoning his paletot to proceed dow
—"*you* used to be Reresby Mordau
separable. Is it true that he is in
ment?"

"To judge from appearances, I
think he was in Lady Belvedere's c

replied Sir Herbert, fulfilling his intention of retreat. And as he leisurely crossed Pall Mall on his way to the Travellers', he found himself calculating the number of days that had elapsed since his last interview with Reresby, amounting to little more than a week!—Even in the hotbed of London fashion, (so prompt a ripener of intimacies,) the sudden familiarity between his fair cousin and his dark friend seemed a little premature.

For a moment, he fancied that, as Reresby passed him on the stairs, a smile of triumph had brightened his face,—purporting to say—"what you refused, I have accomplished; and no thanks to *you*!"—But second thoughts satisfied him that his friend was superior to any such vulgar retaliation. Reresby had probably not so much as perceived him. The smile was only such as he had seen, twenty times before, on the faces of those intoxicated by the favour of Lady Belvedere.

"Poor moth!—I must take care that he do

not singe his wings past redemption!
Sir Herbert, as he made his wa
smoking-room. And before he
many minutes immersed in the fun
sacred spot, Reresby was beside h
waiting to be questioned concern
Belvedere or making a mystery o
quaintance; but meeting inquiry ha

"I sat next her at dinner, on W
at Lady Mary Grovynor Grovynor'
he, "and to my surprise, found
fectly *au fait* to my having been
pagnon de voyage of her loving cous

"Of course. At that time
sponded."

"Which accounts for the numb
Naples stories to which she alluded
her begging me to come and see he
lowing day."

"And you went?"

"I left a card. It was not worth
go in; Cad Rowlandson having fast

self on my arm, who talks for two, and would have reduced me to a cipher. But on the strength of a very gracious bow to-night, I visited her opera-box, and was requested to stay and take her out."

"I could have sworn it!"—

"My dear Glynne, you do me honour!"

"Less perhaps than you think for. You are just the novice for such a woman to seize upon as a spur!"—

"A *spur?*—I was afraid you fancied me booked for a *bridle!*" cried Reresby, with a grimace at the vileness of his own pun.

"I mean that you are the very man for Lady Bel. to put forward with the hope of re-animating Fauconberg's drooping affections."

"Fauconberg?—a *beau ténébreux*,—dark, handsome and silent,—whom I found sitting in her box to-night?"—

"And who probably left it soon after you became the object of her coquetries?—Yes! Fauconberg is dark and handsome; and when harassed by Lady Bel.'s persecutions, silent.

But he talks enough at the proper t
place."—

"And what *is* his time and place?

"Already a duel in view!"—

"Pho, pho, pho!"—

"His place is the House of Lords,
time whenever a question of real m
in debate."

"You don't mean to say," cried
with sudden energy, "that *he* is t
Fauconberg who—"

"Precisely!—The Lord Fauconb
spoke so finely on the Irish Coercion
other night."

"That heavy supercilious-looking
—Who would have dreamed it!"

"You are still young enough,
expect pictures to correspond with the
descriptions contained in an auctionee
logue?"—

"I thought my own presentimen
to be trusted."

"No one's presentiments are to be

If Fauconberg, for instance, ever heard of you before to-night, he probably expected to see a provincial swell, a man full of pretensions and *rengorgé* with bank-notes. Whereas, if he had not thought you an individual worthy his best impertinence, (which he seldom throws away on anything not a member of White's,) he would have made himself less disagreeable."—

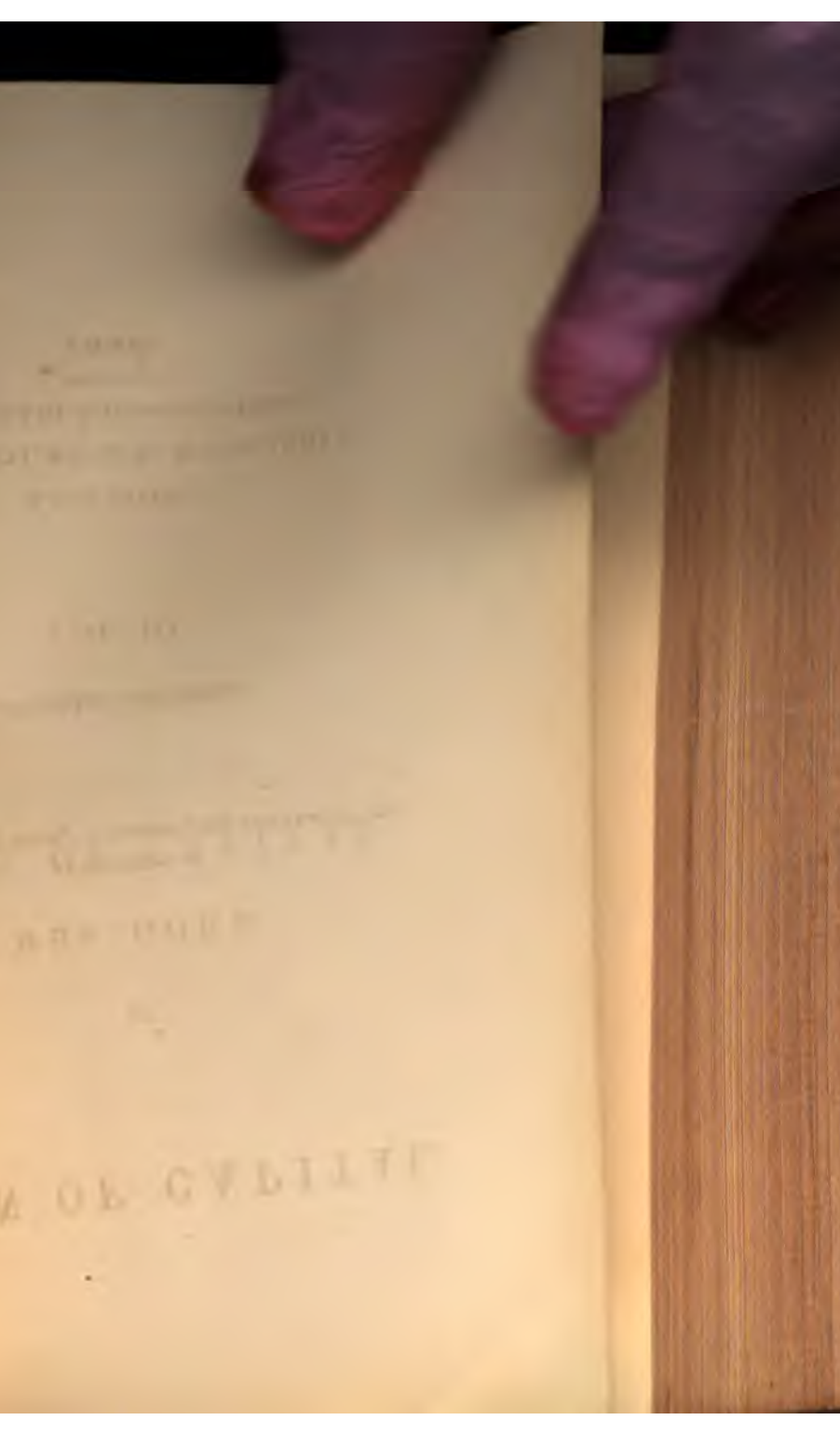
Sir Herbert did not appear aware that his own address at that moment was to the last degree impertinent. Luckily, the conversation was interrupted by the cutting-in of Mr. Settringham; who, after muzzing away the evening at the conversazione of some Hieroglyphic Association, valued only from adding its initials to his name, made his appearance so overbrimming with learning, as to require a whole decanter of iced water towards slaking the dryness of his dust.

END OF VOL. II.

Frederick Shoberl, Junior, Printer to His Royal Highness P
51, Rupert Street, Haymarket, London.

MEN OF CAPITAL.

VOLUME III.



MEN OF CAPITAL.

VOLUME III.

MEN OF CAPITAL.

BY

MRS. GORE,

AUTHORESS OF

"THE BANKER'S WIFE," "PEERS AND PARVENUS," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE

MAN OF CAPITAL;

OR,

OLD FAMILIES AND NEW.

CHAPTER XV.

O thou, the earthly author of my blood,
Whose youthful spirit, in me regenerate,
Doth with a twofold vigour lift me up
To reach at victory above my head,—
Grant proof unto my armour with thy prayers,
And with thy blessing steel my lance's point!

SHAKSPEARE.

Proud and happy, meanwhile, was the elder Mordaunt, in the conviction that his sapling was striking firm root in the ground. All was well with Deasmarsh. He had no fear for the future, and little regret for the past: so impossible did it appear to his sturdy nature and well-regulated mind but that the flighty prepossessions of his son must give

way under the influence of the dut
so earnestly embracing, and the va
timacies he was forming in town.
Grovynor Grovynor had marked h
for the benefactor of his county
ducing Reresby to the political lea
party; and each of the young man
ing letters brought accounts of ple
ner parties, which had laid the fou
others promising to be equally plea

"He will do, my dear sir—h
Not a soul with whom he makes ac
but speaks well of him!" was his
the new member to Jacob Crome
ambled home together, side by side
from the Quarter Sessions. And J
had been receiving a hint that ver
(such as he received only too ofte
discreditable life led at Cambrid
nephews, whom the penurious pol
Squire had placed in one of the
leges to be out of the way of t

could scarcely repress a sigh while reflecting in how many ways the representatives of Deasmarsh had the advantage over the representatives of poor old Cromer Hall.

"And my boy, Tom," added the exulting father, "whom I have scarcely seen this winter (for he has been spending his vacation at Burtsmill with my friends the Freshleys), appears to have returned to college with fresh ardour; for, I am told by his tutor, to prepare for an honour."

Again, the Rector breathed hard and looked sorrowful. It seemed almost like partiality in the dispensations of Providence! Here was this prosperous son of trade, whose daughter was wooed by the only son of the wealthiest nobleman in the shire, and whose sons remained steadfast in the sunshine of life; while at the Hall, the only surviving daughter was wasting to a shadow under the influence of some secret sorrow; and the sons prematurely disgraced by riot and intemperance. Even

in his own peaceful rectory, the linnet, once so cheerful in its nest, was drooping, and had ceased to sing.

It required the exercise of all the good Rector's humble piety not to feel that the new man was receiving a somewhat overcharged measure of the good things of this world.

"I never seemed to feel till *now*," observed Mordaunt, in the unconscious egotism of paternal satisfaction, "that there was worth or stability in prosperity. But I cannot deny that the accounts I receive on all sides of my sons *have* a little inflated my pride. I had no right to count on Reresby's turning out as he has done! To have *him* work out the mine over which I have been so long brooding, is a fiftyfold greater triumph than undertaking it myself. Reresby is young—Reresby is eloquent—Reresby is a child of the century—Reresby has enjoyed a very different education from what fell to *my* share; nay, a more complete one than is be-

stowed on one in a thousand of men of his own condition of life. And to look forward to his distinguishing himself in the accomplishment of measures, the carrying of which, even without his having a hand in the business, will go so far to smooth the pillow of one's deathbed, by feeling how much the condition of humanity has been improved in one's time,—seems to put young blood into my veins!"—

"I am accused, I fancy," silently mused the Rector (when the ruts and grips of a cross-road became fatal to the oratory of his companion), "of being sometimes tedious in the pulpit. But how often—how *very* often—does poor Mordaunt try my patience by his unreasonable panegyrics!—One could almost think he had heard of Stephen's rustication!"—

"Reresby is to make his maiden speech on Thursday se'nnight," resumed his companion, as soon as they got once more on level ground, "on Sir John Grovynor Grovynor's

motion to inquire into the sanatory
our penitentiaries."

"I fancied you were not anxiou
should speak this session?" observe

"Far from it!—But there is no
out against the overtures he has rece
question was originally suggested,
marsh, to the consideration of S
and he insists on being seconde
son."—

"In short, my dear sir, the q
your own property;" observed t
"to be argued with *your* argum
supported by data of your furnishi

"No, no!—Hang it, let the you
enjoy the credit to which he is entit
Mordaunt. "As well say that th
up of a judge derives its merit from
timony of the witnesses!"

"No fear but that Mr. Reresb
golden opinions for himself!" replie
tor, in a depressed voice.—"He ha

advantages on his side for the world to deal with him churlishly."—

A prophecy which, in the sequel, fully accredited the foresight of poor Jacob. The début of the member for Castle Dangan, in political life, was io-pæaned by the press, as though a Daniel were come to judgment!—A champion of the popular party, but standing in the House on independent grounds, a dispenser rather than a coveter of the good things of this world, what fear of the mustering of his partizans! So fond, moreover, is the London world of "sensations," that it would have been indignant had any one pretended to doubt the assertion of those irrefragable oracles the newspapers, that a *rara avis* had broken its egg-shell.

"Remember, I was the first to prophecy that laurels were waiting for you, ready wreathed!"—said the Countess of Belvedere, addressing him with her blandest of smiles from her carriage, which she stopped in

Grosvenor Place for the purpose; "
are bound to reward my foresight
an early day to dine with me. Su
friends as are aware of my happines
acquainted with the new Phœnix, are
ing me for the favour of an introduc

The smiles of the beautiful widow
broad as her compliments, Reresby
effort to look grateful.

" But there is another event,"
sumed, " of which I am equally a
learn the date. When are you likel
again? Lord Fauconberg has set
upon being in the House!"

And *this* time, there needed *no* eff
pear gratified. Reresby was fully a
to the modern aspirant after celeb
scarcely less important to secure t
trumpet renown of the coteries, than
buts and psalteries of the press; and
far as extended the hollow echoes of
the praise of Lord Fauconberg was

"My ladyship waits for an answer," resumed the fair flatterer, perceiving that she had hit her mark.

"And my answer is," replied Mordaunt, "that I shall *never* speak again. Compliments from such a source have converted me at once into a 'Single-speech Mordaunt!' I consider myself a made man for at least half a dozen sessions."—

"The fumes of the intoxicating draught of fame have not yet mounted into your head," rejoined Lady Belvedere with a smile. "But if you will dine with me on Saturday, we will fight out the argument of 'To speak or not to speak,' before an audience less impatient than my coachman and horses."

The proposition having been gratefully accepted, away went the barouche and its giddy occupant, laughing in her sleeve at having so easily found means to enliven with peacock's feathers the jackdaw's sober suit.

For Lady Belvedere, though—thanks to her

personal charms and the independe
which enabled her to render her
Belgrave Square one of the most
resorts in town—she enjoyed the
or rather the intimacy of many of
eminent men of the day, was so lit
the distinction, as to regard the en
her circle of the greatest spirits of
precisely in the same light as she
regarded the acquisition of a costl
furniture, or a Paris pendule.
in display, delighting in having it
her house was one of the most
in the world, she made little
between the novelties furnished
and James, and the novelties fu
the House of Commons. Even
conberg was prized only because h
versally said to be " the most risi
the day."

Her beauty and rich jointure, ho
spoke forgiveness for her levity of

The Countess was a person who, enthroned by authority of the elective monarchy of fashion, it was essential to please.—Aware that their tenure of her favour depended solely on her most capricious caprice, the brilliant birds of her aviary vied with each other in contending for preference by fluttering their gaudy wings, or tuning their garrulous throats; and the brocade and or-molu of Belgravia for once acquired a charm beyond its superficial splendours, from the delusions of more than one gifted mind in mistaking for sunshine the glare of a solar lamp.

Nothing could be better founded than the anxiety entertained by Sir Herbert Glynne on seeing one so genuine as his friend Reresby about to enter the gardens of Armida.—Forewarned by early experience of the heartless vanity of his fair cousin, he could not bear to see, for the hundredth time, the lambent flame of wit converted into squibs and crackers; or a crystal stream diverted from every useful

purpose, to become the ornamenta
of her gay parterres.

Aware, on the other hand, that
meet with angry opposition from hi
their growing intimacy, Reresby
word of his engagement in Belgra
but, secretly convinced of Lady
desire to become the Aspasia of the
cles, buckled on in self-defence
of philosophy calculated to defy
tions.

Prepared to find himself the cen
traction to a brilliant party, and havi
the gorgeous mansion of the Counte
air of modest deprecation, he wa
surprised,—perhaps a little indig
the well-bred coolness of his rec
Neither Park nor Tower guns were
his honour!—Lady Belvedere, who
occupied with the ears of her Spitz
the rich bracelets which, by caressi
she was enabled to display, scarce

her eyes to his while receiving his salutations.

The only persons present to witness his mortification were two very withered specimens of ancient history, who sat engulphed in two of the Countess's roomiest *fauteuils*, and whom, too new to London life to recognise as the oldest poet and most venerable historian extant, he conceived to be family connections; for nothing but prospects of inheritance he fancied could have recommended those bald heads to the favour of the fashionable widow. Before *such* uncles, however, he could readily believe that too warm a welcome to an N. N., like himself, might be imprudent.

Long, however, before the party was completed by the arrival of the eight additional guests constituting the dozen to which the talk-loving Lady Belvedere limited her banquets, Reresby began to feel that he was a *very* small fraction of the whole.—Instead of being invited, as announced to him, to dazzle

the eyes of an admiring company, h
he was there on probation, to be a
scrutinized and implacably judged as
the case where a youthful pretender
in presence of the conscript fathers.

"Instead of being all tongue,
expect, I find I must be all ear!"—
judicious preparation for the ordea
safer to be voted heavy, than flippa

And by studiously concluding th
servations he hazarded with a note
gation, and listening with an air of
edification to twaddle that would sca
current in the dullest periodical
contrived, in the course of dinner, t
the mistrust of the critical synod. T
came prepared to talk him down, r
The moment they saw him disposed
their opinions, he was allowed to h
his own.

The first he was induced to for
these extenuating circumstances,

the charm of Lady Belvedere's clique was somewhat overrated. Her collection included, indeed, several very choice specimens of old china, and fine productions of the ancient masters. But, though the wit of the aged poet and political economy of the venerable politician were as racy in their way as wine of Comet growth, Reresby could not help feeling that both were the High Priests of an exploded creed; or casting repining glances at the corner of the table next the lovely hostess occupied by Lord Fauconberg, where easier and far pleasanter chat was carrying on.

The words of his rival, indeed, did not reach the ear of the tantalized Mordaunt.—But by the rejoinders, which the shriller voice of Lady Belvedere occasionally rendered audible, and still more, by the eloquent expression of her intelligent countenance, he was enabled to judge of the playful and fluent brilliancy of their conversation. To be ad-

mitted as a third into their colloquy,
great object of his ambition. But h
as well have pretended to cap Turkis
with the Sultan ;—the intrusion of a
being the signal for self-dependent n
Fauconberg, to " shut up shop." An
privileged, no one more unassumin
even the homage of a man unknow
world he lived in, endowed him with
teur of a grandee of Spain.

Had the demands on Reresby's a
made by the discussers of great q
around him, necessitated less than th
exercise of his faculties, the novic
naturally have wondered at finding L
conberg included in such a party
beards; for how was he to surmise th
notabilities were merely dust thrown
eyes of Lord Fauconberg's iron-mi
ther; who, but that he had the app
of forming one of a political and
junta, would have opposed an effecti

to his intimacy with the dangerous Lady Belvedere !—

For if unexceptionable in birth and fortune, the Countess was one whom it would have been difficult to tolerate as the wife of an idolized son. As often as it was said of her that she was beautiful as an angel, was it retorted by some bystander, "as a *fallen* angel." Even the rare perfection of her personal charms was deteriorated, to an observant eye, by the haughty expression of her countenance. Her face was like some beautiful Italian flower-garden, overshadowed by pine-trees.

Nor did the reputation of the fashionable widow inspire more confidence than her physiognomy. Like the defeatures produced on the seashore by successive tides that leave long ranges of entangled weeds and broken shells, her coquetries had too often risen to the mark of indiscretion not to have imprinted an injurious blemish. The infatuated few, who

admitted her follies to be number
tested indeed that

Look in her face, and you forgot them

while the indulgent *many* attributed
of her habits of life to the too early v
which had rendered her her own mi
fore the wilfulness of girlhood was

That the liberty thus acquired w
tasteful was evident from the fact t
twelve years' freedom, the Countess
dere still retained her franchise of w
—It is true, her adventures in th
might have filled volumes. But
never been of a sufficiently glaring
endanger her place in society.—Co
tainments and considerable tact in
tion of the objects of her hospitality
on the contrary the most brilliant é
coterie; and while humbler sinner
the ground under the unsparing sc
Pharisees of London life, Prelates
wives, Chief Justices and their daugh

scarcely less assiduous than the votaries of fashionable folly in paying their court in Belgrave Square.

For *in* that court was included courtiership to personages far more influential than herself!—The mansion of "Lady Bel." was a sort of House of Call for ministers. It was irresponsible,—it was neutral.—Nothing in broadcloth and kerseymere to require explanations of defection, or remind people of broken pledges when the day of reckoning arrived. Honourable members of either House were there, to offer up their incense to the Muse or Grace (as Lady Belvedere's caprice of the day might be) who presided as divinity of the Temple; and if, while swinging their censers, conversions were effected or compromises undertaken which, elsewhere, had been rebuked by the forked tongue of irony, the event served only to assign new importance to the accredited head-quarters of intrigue.—

"Strange," mused Reresby, on returning

that night to his chambers in the
" that, among these men, who pas
rate—men capable of connecting v
bunal of posterity the immutable
the past,—the most important ques
day should be discussed in a tone
than I yesterday heard indulged in
volous circle of Lady William A
there no such thing, then, in moder
conscientious obligation?— Is no
nest?—Do people trifle with what
health, both moral and physical,
only to tickle some fashionable In
the exquisite delight of a joke? —
us!—In my anxiety not to pass
let me beware of the contrary
Glynne was right, — *quite* righ
Bel.'s set would fritter me at
nothingness! — *I* am not a Necke
rage to wear my shoestrings in de
crowd of courtiers in diamond buc
am to be any thing in this world,

one of the good purposes chalked out for me by my father,—above all, if I hope ever to achieve an independent position for Magdalen and myself,—let me eschew the seductions of Capua!"—

A heavy sigh and prolonged reverie followed this involuntary reverting to the name of Magdalen! For if the charm of her beauty and artlessness remained strong as ever in his heart, the more largely he mixed with the world, the deeper and sadder his conviction that, the moment his engagement was completed, he must mix with it no more. The habits of Magdalen's education must estrange her irreconcilably from a sphere whose very dialect was an unknown tongue. What would she find to say in answer to the jargon of those with whom the dinners of the last two days had brought him acquainted, or how was her country simplicity to contend against the piquant grace of such a woman as the Countess of Belvedere; against the bon mots that

sparkled from her lips; the pron
cided opinions, announcing her mi
most subjects made up; or the
smiles and vivid glances, imparting
to the one and vigour to the other
the high-bred ease that prevented
ment from appearing opinionated,
centricities absurd?—

The retiring delicacy of Magda
ners and her submissive indecisio
might render her, indeed, a pleas
panion for the fireside. But, i
bewilderment of personal distinc
Reresby was beginning to fancy a
pleasing refuge of mediocrity, and
of a brighter world elsewhere.

Had he found himself of deci
quence in Lady Belvedere's set, he
adhered to his defiance of the wan
But he saw that he was held of sm
that he had a field to conquer;
that, to attain even moderate co

he must fight inch by inch over the ground. All this was a stimulant. Like Caius Marcius, he was not to be called "boy" with impunity.

"Before I make my final retreat," said he, after writing his acceptance of a second invitation to Belgrave Square, "I must teach these people that it is a proof of strength and not of weakness. They must learn to miss me. They must find out that the loss is not wholly on my side!"—

CHAPTER XVI.

And at the last, a path of litel brede
I found, that gretly had not used
For it forgrown was wyth gras and
That wel unnethes a wight might
C

At Deaswold, meanwhile, the
peared to progress with a lagging p
especially at the Rectory. The
of poor Emma peered out in dispi
ness from her close sitting-room u
and flowerless lawn; wondering w
gay hepaticas would *ever* brighten
borders, or *when* the buds woul
swell upon the green rods of the
branches ranging in unsightly diso
the window. As yet, there was
tempt the golden beaks of the black

their hiding-place. As yet, there was no pretext for so much as a weeding-boy to enliven the deserted place. The very evergreens drooped in sickly languor. No life,—no hope in that gloomy little garden!—

It was not, however, ennui alone that weighed down the poor girl's heart. She was thinking, with as much philosophy as was compatible with her unsubtle nature, that, if Deaswold had become a more prosperous, it was a far less cheerful place than before the advent of the Mordaunts. As sunshine extinguishes the logs upon a blazing hearth, the glories of Deasmarsh had proved too much for the village. Cromer Hall was in the right! Her uncle, though he did not see far, saw clearly. Deasmarsh was the sole origin of her estrangement from her cousin Magdalen; and but for occasional glimpses of the luxurious life of the Mordaunts, she should still look forward to a tea-drinking with the Miss Moulseys at Basinghill, as a first-rate enter-

tainment; and, perhaps, but for
banterings, fancy Aristobulus Se
the great man he fancied hims
she had heard and seen and *felt*
marsh invalidated her apportione
ments;—but for which, there had
occasion for such painful efforts at ch
whenever her father, on entering t
found her with one of her aching
resting on her hand, instead of engag
tasks from which her happier girlhoo
both profit and pleasure.

As the spring advanced, indeed,
Rector put these exertions oftene
proof, by inviting her, whenever a
March sunshine seconded his wish
company him in his walks. By a
artifices of affection did the tender f
deavour to assign an interest to thes
expeditions. He could not take h
Hall, indeed; for, between him and
ther's family, the distance was wi

ever. Nor would he escort her to Deasmarsh, for of its comforts and attractions he was beginning to fear that his poor little girl had seen but too much. But he contrived to pass through the village, and, as if unintentionally, place before her eyes the condition of many whose lot was wretched compared with her own, and who addressed themselves, notwithstanding, cheerfully and even enjoyingly to the duties of life. Or, pretending business in his vestry, he managed to guide her across the churchyard so near the tablet erected to the memory of her mother, as to justify an allusion to her memory,—to her virtues,—to her early death,—and the consolation he had derived and still expected to derive from the affection of her surviving child.

It did not surprise the good man, after these indirect appeals to the better feelings of the poor girl who hung upon his arm, to find by a few convulsive sobs that, though silent, she was deeply moved.—But he gained

little from the tenderness roused by
Though, the next time they met
Emma exerted herself doubly to a
rested in the news of the day, as de
the newspaper, or his morning's
talked so much at random, made
able confusion of names, dates,
and, above all, exhibited so much
than usual, and eyes so doubly heav
father resolved to leave her for th
herself.

That he was himself the cause of
that the frankness with which he ha
the denunciations of Ralph Drew
vealed to her susceptible feelings
that she had become an object of
to Reresby Mordaunt, but that
stowed his affections on anothe
likely to enter his head; and all he
some motherly counsellor, some pe
own sex to consult concerning the
of restoring her spirits. But the

hood afforded only Mrs. Mordaunt to whom he could appeal; and he had a repugnance to apply to Deasmarsh! To complain that Emma's life at the Rectory was a dull one—that, in consequence of a family dispute which deprived her of her cousin's society, she wanted companionship,—would have sounded like a reproach for the diminution of their attentions.

As remedies are often extracted from the bitterest herbs, a sneer from one of his female neighbours at length suggested what his own kindly nature had not afforded.

Forced into conversation by the spinsters of Basinghill, by an encounter with their pony-chaise in a narrow lane, he could find no better answer to Miss Moulsey's rebukes concerning the length of time that had elapsed since he or his daughter visited the Manor, than to complain that Emma was poorly.

"How can you expect her to be otherwise," retorted the tart damsel, "so long as you keep

her moped up at the Rectory! In
days, my dear sir, the very word
unknown! But now that schoo
schoolboys are allowed to complai
bored, Miss Emma probably finds
longer than before you thought
quarrel with your brother's family;
she got her head turned by the fl
of Deasmarsh Park."

Yes—the moral malady under
poor girl was sinking *was* perhaps
—Too late now to consider whenc
tagion was derived, or how it migh
avoided, the anxious father dwelt
the remedy to be applied. A total
air and scene seemed indispensabl
a sister of his late wife, who was
one of the pleasantest suburbs
had more than once expressed a w
come acquainted with her niece, he d
a portion of his prudent economies
be better applied than in a journe

where the advice of Lady Barton might possibly assist him in his projects for the future happiness of his child.

Without a word of intimation to Emma, therefore, he completed the necessary preparations; nor, till he had received an acquiescent letter from his sister-in-law (the widow of a scientific professor, who resided in a villa at Kensington) did he fully communicate his plans.

Even a journey to London, however, to which the repining girl had looked forward in former years as an impossible pleasure, failed to bring more than a passing gleam of colour to her cheek. Her father had been a little afraid of seeing her *too* overjoyed; but her utter listlessness on the occasion far exceeded his wish.

It is true Lady Barton was to Emma only a scarcely-remembered aunt, and somewhat formal correspondent. But, if it were only change she wanted, or, according to Miss

Moulsey's account, to escape the mon
home, she might have shown a *litt*
satisfaction at a scheme concocted
afford her pleasure.

As a matter of form, it was decided
them that they must pay a P. P. C.
Deasmarsh. The Rector had bus
entrust to his brother magistrate,
desirous to recommend to his notice
clergyman, named Milnward, who, du
absence, was to supply his place in th
And while occupied in these explana
the study, Emma hastened to anno
Matilda and her mother her departure
"She was about to spend a month in
with her aunt Lady Barton."

So slight and uninteresting was h
course with this unknown aunt, that
never happened to mention her name
marsh; and a month in London with
Barton, so near the commencement
fashionable season, sounded to Matild

an intimation that she was about to bring to a crisis her too-long suspended flirtation with Sir Herbert Glynne, as to the mother of Reresby (to whom the Deasmill episode of her son's life was still a mystery) a threat that she was bent upon completing in town the conquest which timely interference had been the means of frustrating at the Rectory.

Although, therefore, on her entrance, both mother and daughter, on noticing the delicacy of her appearance, had experienced a momentary qualm of conscience concerning their previous neglect, their hearts hardened again on hearing of her approaching departure. While expressing ceremonious hopes that she might enjoy her visit to London, each would have given much to render it impossible;—and their manner towards their young guest grew constrained almost to incivility;—till, in Matilda, poor Emma discovered once more the cold reserved Miss Mordaunt of their first acquaintance;—and in Matilda's mother, the

" purse-proud" woman she had so oft
vituperated at the Hall.

It was a relief to all parties w
Rector arrived to claim his daugh
they took leave together; and, whil
ing, as she quitted the room, a glance
conservatory, the scene of her fo
rather her *only* moments of youthful
the brilliant bloom of the Persian li
moss-rose trees which, at the sam
only a year before, had struck her
lightful and so beautiful, seemed
Emma to exhibit a sort of baleful
As soon would she have placed hers
an upas tree as sat listening again
specious spot, to the touching verse
nyson, recited by the treacherous
Reresby Mordaunt!

The train of reminiscences thus
subdued her spirits to even more th
usual despondency. Had her fathe
heart was warm with the hopes ins

their forthcoming journey, caught sight of her face, he would have seen that it was pale as ashes; and that tears stood in the hazel eyes which used to glisten aforetime with such different feelings on entering the lodge-gates of Deasmarsh!—

It was a soft balmy April day.—The hedge-rows were fragrant with violets and gay with the white blossoms of the thorn; while the bright green grass afforded by its pleasant elasticity a still more grateful assurance of the earth's revival. To enjoy these welcome tokens of Spring, the Rector proposed that, instead of taking the high road, they should skirt the river side as far as the extremity of the Park, and regain the village by the green lane dividing the Deasmarsh property from Cromer Hall.

Lost in reflection,—the father upon the duties he was to transmit to his delegate, and his daughter reverting in dreamy sadness to the days of dangerous joy, when she used to

canter along that grassy level in
with Reresby and his sister, moun
beautiful black barb called Ayesh
for Miss Mordaunt's use,—neither
noticed, as they approached the b
lieus of Deasmill, an unusual stir i
till, on passing a stile leading from
into the lane, a few yards from the
Clemson's premises, the jar of
voices served to rouse them from thei

"What is the matter?—What
be quarrelling about?" said Emm
father, her curiosity *almost* excite
unusual sounds of strife. On w
Rector, an habitual queller of di
questing her to await his return in
ing of the lane, proceeded straig
mill for the purpose of ascertaining
in dispute.

It was a green and shady nc
Emma was left standing;—in Sum
as completely overshaded by the

skirting the lane as a linnet's nest in a hedge; but even now, so sheltered round by grassy embankments, and so fragrant with white and purple violets, that a more impatient person than the Rector's daughter might have been content to rest herself on the bank.

And content, for a time, she was; but on finding that, even after her father, usually so authoritative among his parishioners, had entered the Clemsons' premises, the contending voices continued in dispute, and that many minutes elapsed without affording symptoms of his return, she proceeded leisurely towards the garden-gate, to inquire the cause of his delay.

To her surprise, the group collected in front of old Clemson's house consisted of labourers belonging to the parish; most of them known to her by name. For, from their angry tones while addressing not only the inoffensive old dame but even their revered pastor, she had expected to find the place

beset by trampers and vagrants; r
she imagine the motive that actua
squabble. The cause of Mrs. Clemso
nation, indeed, was sufficiently ma
the injury which the intrusion of r
a dozen pair of hobnailed shoes ha
in the flower-garden, the pride of
which her goodman had that very
been hand-raking into the neatest o
the Spring sowing. But even this
tion was scarcely a sufficient justif
the acrimony with which, disrega
presence of the Rector, she was a
the constable of Deaswold.

"I tell you there's no more g
saying 'twas found on *our* prem
Squire Mordaunt's or Squire Crome
she;—"and so I'm ready to swear
afore e'er a justice of peace in the c

"No need at present of your
good Mrs. Clemson," interposed th
"At the proper time and place, it w

less be required. All you are now asked to do is to allow—"

"No, no, indeed, sir,—no, your reverence, I can't and I won't!" interrupted the poor dame, all but wringing her hands. "It has cut my heart to pieces only to look at it, sir. And if so be I'm to have it in my own sitting-room, as sure as there's a judgment to come, I shouldn't never be able to bide in the place again!"

Laying his hand soothingly on her arm, the pastor proceeded to expostulate earnestly with his agitated parishioner; although in tones too low to reach his daughter's ear.—But Emma's interest in the scene was by this time too strongly excited for forbearance; and while her father, having led the old woman towards her own threshold, stood too deeply engaged in remonstrance to take heed of what was going on at the gate, she slipped into the garden and reached the group of disputants.

All gave way as she approach
Rector's daughter, young as sh
both beloved and respected in t
Even Ralph Drewe, the fellow by
representations she had been made
of such unjust aspersion at Cr
hung back as her light foot adva
the gravel, so as to expose to her
an object that lay there, as if d
the men collected around.—A ghas
—the body of a dead child,—an
swollen as by drowning, and plac
heap of sedges still wet and slipper
stream !—

Impossible to describe the contra
by its pallid immobility, to the
aspect of nature around !—

A sudden dizziness overcame the
poor Emma Cromer at a spectac
dreamed of. Seizing the arm of t
nearest to her, she endeavoured t
herself while contemplating the fa

poor infant. But either some painful association connected with Deasmill, or the frightful word "child-murder," which was circulating from lip to lip, proved too much for her self-possession. For even before the constable could dart forward to direct his reverence's attention to his swooning daughter, the poor girl suddenly relaxed her grasp upon the sleeve to which she was clinging, and rolled senseless at his feet.

When her father, warned by the general outcry, proceeded to raise her tenderly from the ground, her face was lying within a few feet of the murdered babe;—and as he bore her inanimate form into the house, which Mrs. Clemson had previously refused to open to the body that would necessitate the sitting of an inquest within her doors, the indignation with which all present had been upbraiding the old lady's un-Samaritan-like hardness of heart, gave place to whispers of wonder, "not loud but deep," at the excess

of emotion betrayed by the Recto
ter.

"I s'pose, after all, it warnn't *he*
that I saw give the meeting to
chap from Deasmarsh, here in
outbuildings?"—chuckled Ralph D
to those of his fellow-workmen
less favourably disposed towards th
"Ay, ay! — Dame Clemson kn
she's about.—'Tain't nothin' new
have the young lady locked u
parlour."—

And by degrees the interest ar
the discovery of the murdered
effaced by curiosity arising from
of the informer. On the former
had heard everything related to the
that was as yet known;—how, in
water-course flowing from Squire
park, one of the drainers employ
Deasmarsh estate had found an ob
bedded in the clay of the river

Deasmill: which proved, on careful removal, to be the dead body of an infant, having a stone fastened with the fragment of a silk handkerchief to the neck. Immersed till the moment of removal in running water, no signs of decomposition appeared, by which inferences could be drawn concerning the time it had been in the water. But, now that exposure to the atmosphere was producing the usual results, there was every reason to suppose that the body had lain some weeks in the stream.

"Them as put it there knows best," said Ralph Drewe. "But I'll stake my week's wages that it was folks to whom the mill-works is better known than to e'er another soul in the village."

All this had been fully discussed previous to the arrival of the pastor; nor could the wisdom of the constable or gossip of any of the parties present supply rational grounds for surmises touching the origin of the poor babe so inhumanly dealt with. Medical aid

had clearly not been afforded to t
and there was reason to infer that
der had been done. But none,
slightest,—for the discovery of th
Suspicion rested neither upon wife
ter of the village.

Not that Deaswold, more espec
traversed by a railroad, could
immaculate virtue. But whether
trate or pastor, the rule of Jac
was so instinct with the mercies o
Christianity, that no misguided
need to stifle in the river the evid
frailty. Exhortation and remonst
afforded to lead sinners to repen
nothing was said or done, either i
or justice-room, to drive them to

Infanticide had consequently
apocryphal crime in the annals of
and the consternation excited by t
the dead babe lying livid before
the rushes, was all the stronger.

the labourers present declared that, if the act could be brought home to a daughter of their own, they would give her up at once to the gallows; and bitter and opprobious names were bestowed upon the wretched woman who had found no pity for the cry of her new-born child.

So loud was the cry for vengeance that, even when Mr. Cromer re-appeared and issued instructions to the constable for the transfer of the body to the parish poor-house, to await the summoning of an inquest, it was with some difficulty he prevailed on the crowd to disperse.—The dead infant was taken up, and enveloped in a cloth for removal; and still, idlers kept hanging about the premises.

Stimulated by Ralph Drewe's misrepresentations, they were resolved to see more of the state of the young lady's feelings who, when taken by surprise, had been so strangely overpowered;—and though Emma was forced

to accede to her father's desire that
lie down for an hour or two, and r
under Mrs. Clemson's nursing whil
ceeded with the constable into the
execute the necessary forms before
to lend her his arm; and though,
of *their* class of life, the waste of
the loss of a loaf, even when, towar
the pastor re-appeared to claim his
Ralph Drewe and one of his com
still loitering in the lane.

Had it not been for the vexatio
stances under which his brother
had pointed out the fellow to his
Jacob was too much absorbed b
scene which had been passing unde
to take heed of his presence. But
possible for the maligner of his darli
to pass unnoticed; and never ha
pened to be brought face to face
since his painful discussion with th
the Rector could hardly refrain fro

his staff menacingly at the fellow, whose skulking figure met his eye precisely in the ambush from whence he stated himself to have watched the meeting between Emma and the young heir of Deasmarsh Park.

This momentary irritation, however, and even the indisposition of his beloved child, were overlooked in the unpleasant duties awaiting his arrival at the Rectory. His parishioners were now astir;—all commenting, —all exaggerating, — all suggesting. — The coroner had been sent for; and from house to house, throughout the village, went whispers of wonder and commiseration.

Even had not the state of Emma's health necessitated the postponement of their journey, the conscientious Jacob would have felt it right, under such circumstances, to remain at his post. He would not have been satisfied to leave the case in the hands of so rigid and uncompromising a dispenser of the law as his brother magistrate at Deasmarsh.—

That which at present appeared
tated crime, might, he trusted, pro
sult of ignorance and fear; — th
ducing some *very* young girl to
birth and death, for the former of
she was accountable.

But it was in vain he endeavou
gest this probability to the goo
others. The surgeon by whom t
the child was examined, pronoun
had not only been born alive, but h
after birth its natural nutriment;
exasperating public feeling again
natural mother who could have
yet doomed it to death, that the
Jacob could not help wishing t
science a little less circumstan
testimony.

Bad enough to have a wanton
deress in his parish!—But to *his*
idea was scarcely less overwhelmin
to give up to capital punishment

whom he had preached the gospel of peace. For prisons, condemned cells, the hangman and the halter, were not to him *mere* words, as to many who pronounced them.—As a magistrate, he had considered it his duty to acquaint himself in detail with the ignominious paraphernalia of the worst rigour of the law; and scarcely a year had elapsed since, in company with Mr. Mordaunt, he visited a condemned prisoner at Northampton, and endeavoured to soften with words of grace the stubborn heart of a malefactor.

All he could now do, however, after receiving from the coroner the verdict of "wilful murder" returned by the jury, was to pray inwardly and heartily that, since human justice must have its way, it might not fall upon persons too feeble or too hardened for human retribution to produce an example advantageous to the community at large.

CHAPTER XVII.

C'est un avantage pour la vie entière d'
heureux dans l'age où la tête el le cœur comm
C'est la leçon du sort !—Elle forme les hom
étend les idées, et mûrit le cœur avant que
aie affaiblies.

Scenes and arguments such as
forded sad preparation for poor Er
ney to town!—As soon as the i
over, and the Rector had seen co
the earth the body of the hapless
titled to the solemnization of the
church, he was the first to hasten t
ture;—eager to escape all furthe
of an incident so unsatisfactory.

Not a soul in the village but h
visited Deasmill, to survey the spo

body was found; and the poor-house, to examine the fragment of silk produced before the coroner, as having been tied round the throat of the child;—and a warrant was in readiness in the hands of Mr. Mordaunt against the person or persons unknown, whom an active constable was intent upon bringing to light.—*His* further aid, therefore, might be dispensed with in the business; and the absence of his daughter while such inquiries were pending being doubly desirable, the lapse of a few days saw them settled at Lady Barton's villa.

For Villa was the name which Mr. Cromer's prim sister-in-law chose to bestow upon an old-fashioned brick-house in the High Street of Kensington; having in its rear a walled-garden full of leaden figures and evergreens that would have done honour to the Borgerhout at the Hague, from whence William of Orange imported the exact model of the suburb that started into ugliness under

his royal auspices westward of l
capital;—and though as unsightly
teresting a residence as the stiffe
angular boarding-school of that bi
ing neighbourhood, poor Jacob
as a happy exchange for the gras
blackbirds of the Rectory.

Though his sister-in-law's tacitu
have proved at any other time a
lant, it was a comfort to his huma
feel secure against further questio
ing the finding and condition of "
or being asked at all moments of
every soul, gentle or simple, wit
came in contact, "what chance o
the murderers?"—

For Lady Barton was a cold f
woman, who, in the dispirited
pretty niece and the abstracti
brother-in-law, saw only the grav
ing his cloth;—nay, had they
the preceding year, she would

shocked at the levity of character apparent in both.—

For she was one of those who aptly illustrate the definition that "ceremony is a habit of the body invented to cover the deficiencies of the mind;" disguising her real insignificance under an almost Spanish dignity of reserve.

The husband whose knighthood had deceived the Mordaunts into supposing Lady Barton a denizen of May Fair, was in his time a painstaking *savant;* who, by the discovery of some very small planet or very useless gas, had made his way into a professor's chair, and entitled himself to be presented at a levee and converted into a Sir Nicholas;—by which operation, both himself and his wife,—(or, as it better becomes us to call her, his lady,) fancied him endowed with all the consideration of a Sir Humphrey Davy.

Her childless leisure thenceforward made a hobby of what she called his "European

renown;" for, by means of those
and feelers which pretenders to sci
tinction manage to put forth, i
countries, the discoverer of what no
about, now it was discovered, had
to affix to his name the initials of c
tinental orders of chivalry, almost a
to fame as the planet, or gas, or
he had dragged forth from obscurit

These insignia of knighthood lo
however on the title-pages of the
emitted ever and anon by the learn
to keep the Royal Society and Ph
Transactions in mind of him;—a
still, when appended to his name i
logue of the exhibition of the Royal
which, season after season, was su
tain a portrait either in oils, chalk,
marble, wax, cameo, or intaglio, o
Sir Nicholas Barton,—K. L. M. N.
no matter what.—The old house at
ton still bore witness on its walls,

on slabs and brackets, and in every corner, how very plain and stupid-looking a man may become, by sufficient labour, the discoverer of planets and gases.

Still, however, his ambitious relict sunned herself in his slender ray of glory; and on the strength of an overgrown mural tablet in Kensington Church, wherein the Barton arms were emblazoned in coloured marbles, and the number of the late Sir Nicholas's foreign knighthoods enumerated in all the letters of the alphabet, she invariably qualified herself as "the widow of the late celebrated Sir Nicholas Barton."

To follow out the pretension, the little dry chip of a ladyship assumed a rigidity of deportment worthy of a ruff and farthingale. Had Sir Isaac Newton left a widow, she could not have been more primly self-conscious; and, as the world is easily imposed upon by gravity of mien, the annual conversazione at which "the accomplished widow of the late cele-

brated Sir Nicholas Barton" co
gether the learned pundits, artist
of letters with whom herself or th
brated Sir Nicholas had in the cou
vainglorious lives scraped acquainta
rivalled those of Babbage, Murchi
Marquis of Northampton.

So eagerly do man-and-womank
together to stare at swans with
and calves with six legs, that a m
sive announcement of the presence
sor Griebuth from Abo, and Signo
zano from the Observatory of P
say nothing of the domestic ast
the Imaum of Muscát in the full
his caste, would have sufficed to co
Lady Barton's roof half the dowa
peerage.—But, as it was, she ha
complain of; as the multitude of c
under the frame of a frightful ov
glass, surrounded with plaster chai
which, in the course of the last ce

probably exhibited a tinge of gilding, could attest, to such as were not too much afraid of a coating of dust to peruse the honourable and right honourable names therein recorded.

In the course of the first four and twenty hours spent by Emma Cromer with her aunt, she had to undergo an enumeration of titles, as included in Lady Barton's visiting list, which, in the innocence of her heart, she wished could have been made to excite the envy of the Mordaunts, as well as her own exceeding weariness.

To cultivate by ceremonious card-leaving these grand acquaintanceships, was the chief object in life of the widow of the late celebrated Sir Nicholas. The vain pretensions of a series of years had so consolidated themselves into shape and substance, as almost to impose upon herself. She *really* fancied the defunct planet-seeker a great philosopher, and his widow a component part of the world of science; and the imperial dignity she assumed, in consequence, with the country cousins who

were strangers within her gate
more than she considered due to
ference of station and intelligence.

In such an aunt, poor Emma soo
she must not look for the mate
which, in spite of Lady Barton's c
letters, she had almost expected
her mother's sister; and even the
guine Jacob satisfied himself, with
few days, that there was as wide a
between their natures as distanc
Kensington and Deaswold.

On his venturing, during Emma
from the room, to advert to the na
painful incident which had reta
journey to town, the widow of the
brated Sir Nicholas screwed up he
dimensions that rendered the existe
feature almost as problematical
the planet discovered by her lea
band; and, on expressing a hope
niece had been kept in ignorance

leading to such indelicate surmises, and learning how much poor Emma had suffered from becoming an accidental witness of the discovery, Lady Barton drew in the prudish skirts of her clothing, on her niece's reentrance into the room; as though even her own high-dried immaculateness might suffer by contact with one whose eyes had been exposed to so contaminating a spectacle.

Her estimate of her country kinsfolk was, in fact, somewhat disparaging. Aware that the Rector's daughter depended on his prudence for her future provision, she had carefully eschewed acceptance of the often-proffered hospitality of Deaswold Rectory, lest it should be expected of her, in return, to divert any portion of her havings from the collateral heirs and namesakes of the late celebrated Sir Nicholas Barton. Still, though holding aloof from intimacy, she had mentally endowed the Cromers with a sort of legendary consequence, as belonging to an

old Northamptonshire family, and
living adjoining the family estate v
plied her with such abundance o
But now that, by catechizing h
hearted niece, she ascertained that
not on visiting terms with Cromer
that their only neighbours were a
Lancashire cotton-spinners, of who
certain choking in the throat wh
attempted to utter their name, the
spoke as slightly and succinctly as
Lady Barton began to perceive tha
who had been fifteen years in her
made but a bad match for hersel
much to be pitied, after all.

The sentiment, however, entitl
exercise the most patronizing auth
her niece; and she no longer su
the simple way in which Emma
ringlets, or fashioned her dress.—W
she know, poor girl, of the ways of
buried all her life in a country vi

no other model than a family of cotton-spinners!—

It is true that, at the conversazione given as in honour of her country cousins, Emma saw nothing in the air of the female guests of Lady Barton to justify the severity of her fastidiousness:—their costumes being "translated from the French," with singular deviations from the text; while the organs of invention of Lady Madrepore and certain others of the bluest of blues, appeared to have been taxed, even to extravagance, for the creation of their costumes.

Accustomed to the chaste simplicity of dress of her cousin Magdalen, or the costly elegance of Matilda Mordaunt, Emma could scarcely understand the monstering of nothings perpetrated by the female moieties of the celebrities, gathered together by the widow of the late celebrated Sir Nicholas.

She was, however, too completely out of spirits to enjoy the risible side of the affair.

The few really eminent persons pres
manded her respect: and though
dered a little what could have brou
so far to converse together, when th
have confabulated so much more
in town, she was not the less gratef
aunt for pointing out the president
and such an association or acade
principals of colleges without end
professors of poetry appeared su
prosy, and certain distinguished ro
sadly inclining to the *pot au feu*,
no avowal of her disappointment.

So proud, however, was the reli
celebrated Barton, of the learned
and scientific congress she manage
semble, that her displaced furniture
stored to its customary formality,
smell of the lamp had evaporated
dingy staircase, before she could di
little person of the air of dignity wi
it was invested by the mere duty of cu

to such eminent personages. Nay, in the enthusiasm of the moment, fancying that, because R. A.s had accepted her invitation, she must be a distinguished patroness of the arts, she proceeded to the extremity of hiring a glass coach (of the species supplied by Chancellor to convey the pupils of Kensington boarding-schools to dentists and the Eidouranion), for the purpose of chaperoning her niece to the private view of the Royal Academy.

It was one of the gala days of her dull year; one of the annual revivals of her withered laurels; one of the occasions forcibly impressing on her narrow mind that she was the widow of a late celebrated Sir Nicholas. She delighted in finding herself in contact with dilettanti lords and ladies, — primates, prelates, and every variety of the shovel-hat and silken apron, — cabinet-ministers, — renowned diplomats, — Miss Angela Burdett Coutts, and others of the chosen few tabooed

from indulgence in livelier pleasures t
cient concerts, oratorios, and pictur
ries. While deliberately and dignif
cending the staircase, she looked full
faces of those she met; with a mild
satisfied consciousness that, had not t
celebrated" poised his telescope or si
his crucible to some purpose, she wo
have been there.—

Unaware of being peculiarly blest
privilege of entering those crowded
four and twenty hours before the
twelvepence enables every apprentice
don to enjoy the same advantage, poo
gave herself up without reserve to
joyment of the pictures. And a gre
sure it was. Having never before s
a large collection of modern paintin
untaught eye was more captivated
brilliant colouring and *ad captandum*
before her, than by the dingy Hobbim
gloomy Carraccis at Settringham Abbe

very blue skies, *very* blue mountains, and *very* blue seas and rivers of the landscapes, delighted her unformed taste; and while examining the pink and white portraits of young ladies, with hair that looked like an advertisement of Willis's Mirific Balsam, and white satin whose gloss might have driven a dressmaker into hysterics, she could not conceive finer things of Raphael!

And, then, Landseer's colts were all but neighing; and there was a little pathetic episode by Frank Stone, that caused even episcopal eyes to glisten, and "drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek" in the shape of one of the bitterest Barons on the Bench, which made the Catalogue tremble like an ague-fit in the hands of the tender-hearted Emma!—

So absorbed, in short, was the unsophisticated girl in the more striking features of the gallery, that the widow of the late celebrated might almost as well have been alone; and, but that her country cousin was entitled

to go back to Deaswold and acquaint the cotton-spinners, her neighbours, of the privileges and immunities accorded to the memory of the late Sir Nicholas, which had enabled her privately to view the exhibition of the Royal Academy in company with some thousands of distinguished persons,—Lady Barton would have regretted not having secured her usual companion, the portly relict of an Archdeacon residing in Trevor Square, also the widow of a "late celebrated;"—a volume of occasional sermons, bearing his very reverend name, being asked for, once in five years, or so, at Hatchard's.

Reduced to the consolation of occasionally dropping a prim curtsey to some eminent individual, who acknowledged it by an equally ceremonious bow,—and finding the study of the fashions for May on the persons of a few elegant women a pleasanter pastime than hazarding an attack of ophthalmia by fixing her eyes on the glare of the pictures,—Lady

Barton had been guilty of as many yawns as perhaps were ever produced by the occasional sermons of her friend the Archdeacon; when her ear was arrested by the silver but decided intonation of a voice that appeared to be laying down the law in an elaborate criticism of the exhibition.

Unaccustomed, in a clique the prevailing colour of whose cloth was black, to find so much authority conceded to the weaker vessel as the ayes and other acquiescents of the interlocutors accorded to the lady in question, her surprise was at an end when, on turning round for a personal scrutiny of the parties, she beheld the beautiful woman, attired in the extreme of fashionable splendour, who was instructing a cabinet minister, a lord of the bedchamber, and two or three other men of less notoriety but more striking presentment, what they were to admire in the pictures, and what to make a bid for in the sculpture.

The Kensington lady decided that some very great personage was before her;—too young, indeed, for one of the princesses of the blood; and, albeit her air was foreign, speaking English too well for an ambassadress. But the deference with which everybody made way for her approach proved her right, if short of divine,—that is, short of *royal*,—to be highly patrician; and the "widow of the late celebrated" set her down as, at the least, Mistress of the Robes!

By the young man on whose arm she sometimes leaned, and into whose ear she sometimes whispered, but who was oftener despatched hither and thither, to ascertain the number of some picture before which a crowd was collected, and determine from the name of the artist in the catalogue whether it were worth getting elbowed to look at,—her divinity, indeed, appeared to be fully admitted. Lady Barton, as she knit her narrow brows to gaze upon them, decided

that she had never seen so handsome a couple; and, when another cabinet minister added himself to the group, and the courtliest of foreign diplomats set his *langue bien pendue* in motion to unite his compliments to her ladyship with his compliments to the exhibition, the little lady, who had shrunk into almost nothing, could no longer refrain from jogging the elbow of her niece and directing her attention towards the strangers.

The artless face of Emma Cromer, flushed with excitement arising from the interesting picture she had been contemplating, proved apparently as striking to the fashionable Countess as her own Mechlin lace and tortoiseshell parasol to Lady Barton. But what was the amazement of the frigid aunt when, in addition to the looks of admiration lavished upon her niece by the Mistress of the Robes, the young man on whose arm she had been so familiarly leaning, hurried towards Emma with

an extended hand, full of kindly recognition and friendly inquiries after her father.

Unversed in the proprieties of life, it did not occur to Emma, nor did her aunt's fidgety gestures avail to suggest, that it would be proper to present to her chaperon this familiar friend. She explained, indeed, that she was "on a visit to her aunt Lady Barton;" but used the direct name, without the smallest allusion to the "late celebrated," and spoke of the neighbourhood of town without specifying her residence at Kensington; so that the sensitive old lady felt her dignity considerably impugned.

The undisguisable confusion of countenance exhibited by Reresby Mordaunt at an unexpected encounter with the cousin of Magdalen under circumstance so suspicious, being, however, naturally laid to her niece's account, long before the colloquy between Emma and young Mordaunt wore to end, Lady Barton had founded a romance *à la*

Calprenède, in twelve volumes, upon their mutual embarrassment.

That the cavalier accompanying so influential a lady as the one she had by this time heard addressed as "Lady Belvedere" could be little short of a lord, she nothing doubted; and what she had treated as listlessness or stupidity on the part of her niece might, after all, be the preoccupation of a tender attachment for some Lord Alfred or Lord Algernon! So handsome a young man, so graceful, so elegant, so high in worldly distinction, presented indeed a sufficient apology for the poor girl's infatuation!—

Lady Barton even stifled the reproofs she had been meditating, in the eagerness of her interest concerning the handsome stranger; and as Emma replied to her questioning simply that he was the son of one of their Northamptonshire neighbours (without allusion to cotton-spinning) who had lately distinguished himself in parliament, and further inquiry

brought to light that he was the identical Mordaunt whom even the widow of the late celebrated Sir Nicholas Barton's beloved Morning Herald saluted with notes of admiration, she not only forgave his deficiency of peerage, but re-entered her glass coach (leaning on the arm of a meagre old footman, pepper and salt from the crown of his head to the gaiter of his shrunken shank) as proudly as though it were a coach and six!—

CHAPTER XVIII.

Tell me, wherein have I offended you?
Have I affected wealth or honour,—speak?
Are my chests fill'd up with extorted gold?
Is my apparel sumptuous to behold?—
Whom have I injur'd that ye seek my death?
These hands are free from guiltless bloodshedding,
This breast from harbouring foul deceitful thoughts.

SHAKSPEARE.

Was ever feather so lightly blown to and fro as this multitude!—

SHAKSPEARE.

No announcement of the Rector of Deaswold's sudden expedition to London (the first in her life even attempted by his daughter) having transpired in the village previous to the still more remarkable event which had struck dismay into the hearts of young and old, the journey was instantly attributed by those idle talkers who love nothing better than to misaccount for the movements and motives

of their neighbours, to his reverence's desire to divert the young lady's attention from the sad sight she had witnessed, which was said to have excited such potent emotions in her mind.

"His reverence wishes, no doubt, to drive such a terrible story out of her young head," said the Deaswold blacksmith, in whose shop the question was discussed.

"But why more terrible to *her* than other folks?" inquired a matter-of-fact farmer, who was waiting, beside the anvil, his turn to be served.

"'Cause a young lady's feelings is finer and more delicate-like than the darters o' carters and ploughmen!" was the bitter retort of Ralph Drewe, by whom the subject had been broached. "And no doubt the young miss felt it the more from seeing the murdered babby laid out at Deasmill,—a place as she's so fond of—and, as we all know, she's been 'customed to make a hiding-place!"

"What d'ye mean by hiding-place?" cried farmer Richards, turning roughly upon him.

"I mean what I say, and what I've seen master Richards!" retorted the labourer,—"and what 'tain't his reverence's fault that I didn't lose my work for saying stoutly that I *had* seen!"—

"And what was *that*, Ralph?" inquired the blacksmith, unwilling to discountenance either customer.

"The meeting behind backs at odd times o' young Master Mordaunt (as is gone to Lon'on to be parli'ment man) and the parson's young lady," persisted Ralph, unflinchingly; "which I saw with my eyes more times than one,—and old Madam Clemson, for all her sanctified looks and mealy mouth, a-going between 'em to keep matters close."—

"And when was this, Ralph?" inquired the blacksmith, applying his hammer ringingly to the iron as though a bit of gossip inspired him with courage to work.

"Oh! times ago,—a good sight afore Shrove Tuesday."

"And you said nought about it till now?"—

"Didn't I though!—I up and told Squire Cromer, chapter and verse, straight an eend, afore the sun went down, the last time as ever I saw the young folks give each other the meeting at Deasmill."

"The Squire!—*Why*, what had *he* to do with his finger in the pie?—Why didn't you tell his reverence, when you were about telling?"—observed the incredulous farmer.

"'Cause when even his brother repeated to him what I'd seen and said," cried Ralph, striking his stick angrily on the ground, "he gave no more belief to the story than if it had been told by crazy Hob."—

"The more to his credit!" cried the farmer.—"I'm of *his* way of thinking. I can't abide eaves'-droppers and tale-bearers. And if

e'er a man in the land came a 'costing o' me with stories about *my* wenches, I'd make no more bones o' laying him on the flat of his back, than o' shootin' a rabbit!"—

"And *that* maybe, you'd make bones on, if so be you wasn't a tenant o' Squire Mordaunt's, who's got never a gamekeeper on his estate!"—added the blacksmith.

"No, nor e'er a tenant as wouldn't give the coat off his back to serve him!" retorted the farmer,—"which is more than can be said by the gentry at the Abbey or the Squire at the Hall, or any other o' the grandees, who'd risk the life of a fellow-creatur' to save that of a hen-pheasant."—

"But if so be, Ralph, as you told, or *got* told to his reverence, how his young lady came 'courting unbeknownst to Deasmill,"—argued the blacksmith, partly to divert the farmer's attention from his clumsiness over his job,—"how come it as he brought her, of his own accord, and friendly-like, back to

the Clemsons'; so as she fell in the way o' seeing the corpse?"—

"That's more than I'll take on me to say!" said Ralph, doggedly.—"I can only tell what happened,—but not *why* 't happened. Only I've read in story-books and heerd tell, many's the time, that when folks have done aught that's amiss in a place, they've most times a nat'ral hankering to look at it again."—

"Gammon, gammon, gammon!"—cried the farmer, scornfully snapping his fingers.—"There ben't a better nor a modester young lady than Miss Emma in the village of Deaswold, let t'other be who she may. And she chanced to call at the Mill, 'cause she was out a-walking with his reverence, like a good dutiful darter as she is; and they'd both been together at Deasmarsh, a-calling on Squire Mordaunt's family; 'cause there's nubbody among all the gentry round but is proud to welcome 'em to their houses."

"Oh! there isn't, isn't there?"—cried

Ralph Drewe, wagging his head. "Well, that's news, somehow, I never expected to hear!"—

"Why you're not going to pretend that his reverence an't the best o' friends with the Abbey folks, — and the Deasmarsh folks, — and the old frumps, man and woman, at Basinghill; and who else is there, pray, of gentry hereabouts?"—

"*Who?*—Why the parson's own brother, sure!" retorted the informer.

"And d'ye mean to say, Ralph, that his reverence isn't made welcome to Cromer Hall?"— said the blacksmith, stopping short in his hammering.

"To the house of his father, and his father's father afore him!" — emphatically added the farmer.

"And if he was, pray," — was the roundabout answer, — "why and wherefore should the Squire have out his old rips o' coach-horses, twice every Sabbath day, to carry the

family to Basinghill Church, astead a' biding in his own parish?"—

"That's true enow!" said the blacksmith, resuming his hammering.

"Bless ye! the brothers haven't exchanged so much as good-day sin' afore Lent!"—pursued Ralph Drew, pretending to whisper.

"That is, not since you kindled up unkindness atween 'em!" cried the stout-hearted farmer.

"At all events," added the bitter tongue, "you won't go to deny, I s'pose, the young Miss at the Rectory ben't thought fit company for the young Miss at the Hall? I'm ready to take my Bible oath, afore a magistrates' bench, that Squire Cromer said he'd lock up his daughter on bread and water, if ever he caught her exchanging so much as a word with her cousin!"—

"Eaves'-droppin' again, eh?"—cried the farmer—"Amazing what wonderful things

folks as is always a listenin' manages to hear!"—

"It *is* a queerish story, though, neighbour, one must allow?"—said the smith, turning up an inquiring eye at his customer, as he reached the last nail of the colt's last shoe — and a little surprised that Squire Mordaunt's tenant persisted in scouting the intelligence of a tale-bearer like Drewe.

On the other hand, all in the village were not equally mistrustful of Ralph's veracity.— His statement concerning the clandestine meetings at Deasmill had long preceded the discovery of the murdered infant; — and though there was no direct testimony connecting the two circumstances, the gossips of the village were not slow to ascribe the incidents affecting a spot so obscure to one and the same origin.

Mrs. Clemson, as a person who kept aloof from those who considered themselves her equals, had always been an object of dislike;

and now that she was accused of having administered to the frailties of her superiors, her neighbours set no bounds to their abuse.

"They saw *now* why she had discouraged their visits to Deasmill.—Considering who frequented her house, no wonder she found her humble neighbours troublesome. Thank goodness, *they* had never been accused of harbouring young couples against the wish of their families, or suspected of aiding and abetting in putting an innocent babe out of the way."—

For if, in cities, evil report find eagle pinions, how much more in an uneventful village, where it meets with no obstruction in its course, and is secure from the amercements which wounded honour imposes on a class still subject to chivalrous forms of retribution!—

The old dames who sat before their spinning-wheels, lying away the good name of their pastor's child, considered indeed that they had received provocation to severity be-

cause a Deaswold girl, named Alice Hakewill, who had been seen loitering at nightfall ten days before the discovery of the drowned infant, in the neighbourhood of the mill-works, had been subjected, at the coroner's suggestion, to examination by the matron of the workhouse. Instead of rejoicing that, by this prompt measure, an innocent person was rescued from suspicion, they began by whispering, and finally declared outright, that "if greater folk than poor Alice had been dealt with as rigorously, murder might have come out.—But 'twas only the children of the poor was open to suspicion: — only the children of the poor was subjected to insult!"—

At Deasmarsh, meanwhile, nothing transpired of this tale of village scandal. Mrs. Mordaunt was a woman too grave of deportment to encourage communicativeness on the part of her servants; and the mind of her husband was wholly and entirely engrossed by the

brilliant career of his son. Scarcely a day, but letters passed between him and Rereby. Gleanings from his own fertile fields of study were never wanting, to be tendered to one whose garners could not be too full; and the cotton-spinner's daily *résumé* of argument in reply to the *résumé* of the debate of the preceding night contained in the Times, was a masterpiece of political writing by which his son was not slow to profit.—Questions of profound national interest were in progress of discussion: and it was pleasanter to write of them to the candid and intelligent young man prepared to meet him, point to point, with the practised vigour of an athlet, than to potter them over with Sir William Settringham, or bear with the mysterious nods and significant smiles that implied the dissent of the consequential but empty Aristobulus.

That his worthy neighbour Jacob Cromer was absent from the country during discussions which could scarcely have failed to pro-

vake misunderstanding between them, was highly satisfactory to Mordaunt; and as the zealous representative who replaced him at the Rectory, possessing the charm of novelty, contrived to draw larger congregations to Deaswold Church than had ever been collected there since the Mordaunts settled in the country, no one had cause to regret the sojourn of the Rector with the widow of "the late celebrated."—

The Deasmarsh family did not, however, note with the less disgust the occasion taken by the Squire of Cromer Hall to demonstrate his enmity to his brother, by resuming his attendance at the parish church, the moment Jacob ceased to officiate and Mr. Milnward assumed his place. No Basinghill, so long as his brother and niece remained the guests of Lady Barton; and the "rips" of coach-horses had consequently reason to promise themselves a holiday, every Sabbath, throughout the merry month of May.

But the calculation was premature. After establishing his little daughter under the care of her aunt, and seeing Emma resign herself cheerfully to the routine of the mildewed old mansion full of dark corners and light closets, which it was the widow of the late celebrated's pleasure to call a villa, the good Rector began to find the days hang heavy on his hands which, at Deaswold, he was accustomed to fill up with works of duty and mercy. He wanted sinners to lead, and old offenders to sentence to repentance.—He wanted sheep-stealers to commit, and drunkards to exhort;—he wanted disconteated spirits to soothe into piety, and young children to brighten into the glorious intelligence that the rewards and punishments of this world are not all in all.

He hankered after home, in short; and hungered after the cure of souls committed to his guardianship like sheep into the hand of the shepherd;—and with the view of passing

among his flock a single Sunday of his six weeks' absence, set off by rail one pleasant Friday—(disastrous day for a journey!)—for Deaswold.

He arrived as safe, however, as though it had been Monday, or Tuesday, or any other day of the week;—and pleasant was it to his cheery nature, after the dust and drought of a High Street and the Arabia Petræa of Lady Barton's high-walled garden, to inhale the fragrance of his own sweetbriars and honeysuckles, listen to his thrushes and blackbirds, and set foot on the elastic turf of his lawn.—His favourite cows, on returning from the pastures, acknowledged by an affectionate low the well-known voice and touch of their master. His crop-eared terrier leaped to his very waist for joy at seeing him again; while the faces of his faithful servants expanded for glee: the master so much more loved and respected than feared being dear to them as their flesh and blood.

His young substitute, Mr. Milnward, on the other hand, had only satisfactory accounts to render. All had prospered. They had obtained no further clue to the perpetrators of the dreadful deed which had disgraced the village; but at least it was not followed up by further transgressions.

It struck the good pastor with some little surprise, indeed, that, when he made his appearance in the village the following day, his parishioners seemed to fly before his face. It could scarcely be fancy:—for at that season of the year and time of day, the cottage doors were invariably open, and the greater portion of the occupations of their inmates transacted in the air. But scarcely had he turned the corner by the churchyard-stile, when the women retreated from their washing-tubs, and the men from their working-benches;—and as he passed the smithy, the blacksmith contrived to be so busy at his forge as to avoid all need for salutation.

Even the children stared in his face with more of curiosity and less of reverence than their wont.

"I begin to perceive the truth of the adage," mused the parson, good-humouredly, "that the absent are always in the wrong! Our London trip may do something towards restoring my little girl's roses and cheerfulfulness; but it seems to have a trifle impaired my infallibility in my vatican of Deaswold."

A bitter thought at that moment traversed his mind, that his brother was perhaps the origin of his decline of popularity! But Jacob was not the man to cherish bitter thoughts. He would not think so ill of the Squire. He would not think so ill of his father's son. Moreover, the ingratitude of the vulgar is proverbial. Let the hand that gives them bread be but a single day withdrawn, and it will become as the hand of the stranger.

On the morrow, however, when officiating

in his sacred vocation, he *was* a little struck by the slenderness of his congregation. More than half the pews, habitually crowded, stood empty! Of the vacancy of the chancel-pew belonging to the Hall, he took no heed; unaware that, during his absence, his brother's family had re-transferred their devotions from Basinghill to their own parish. But Farmer Richards and his wife and children, who were as constant in their attendance at church as the parish clerk, were wanting; though, only the preceding night, he had bidden them good evening from the Rectory gate, so as to be certain that it was not indisposition kept them away.—And twenty others—twenty of his most respected parishioners—were equally to seek.

The leaven of human vanity, scantily as it prevailed in his nature, suggested that the congregation had probably fallen off during young Milnward's administration; and that his flock did not on this occasion expect the

Rector to officiate in person. But, as they were walking home after church, the young man, by way of mitigating the mortification apparent in the countenance of the pastor, indiscreetly attributed the empty pews to which Jacob had been preaching to the heat of the weather.

"Last Sunday, sir," said he, "the morning was cloudy. But had the same crowd which *then* attended morning service been present to-day, the heat of the church would have been overpowering!"

But Jacob was not deceived. His was not a congregation of fine ladies. Swooning was by no means a favourite recreation at Deaswold. Throughout the dog-days, his church was more crowded than at Christmas. No! some moral mischief must be in progress.

According to his custom, he retired into his study for rest and refreshment between the two services; and, while communing with

himself in the stillness of his chamber, the idea that, during his absence, his brother might have been stirring up strife against him, recurred with such force to his mind as completely to unhinge him. His was not a heart to bear up against the conviction of personal unkindness. Moreover, the cause of dissension betwixt himself and the Squire was of so delicate and cutting a nature, that only to revert to it brought a gush of tears from his eyes.

When, therefore, he issued forth again from the Rectory, for evening service, the least observant person might have noted that his eyelids were swollen; and in addressing the "dearly beloved brethren," who were now diminished to so scanty a flock that they might have been numbered, one by one, his voice faltered so manifestly that, at the close of the first portion of the duty, young Milward caused the clerk to hand him a slip of paper, hastily inscribed with pencil, proposing

to read the sermon;—the heat of the weather being apparently too much for the Rector.

The hint sufficed to recall poor Jacob to himself. The hint sufficed to remind him that, in the house of God, he must not suffer his mind to stray to the things of this world; and overmastering, by a strong effort of conscience, his painful emotions, he not only declined assistance, but preached with a degree of energy and unction, of which, till that day, he had never yet given proof. The Mordaunts listened with surprise and edification. They had always respected him as a worthy man. They had never before given him credit as an eloquent divine.

It might be that the discovery evoked certain qualms of conscience. For, suffering his family to return home alone, Mr. Mordaunt loitered in the churchyard, till Jacob and young Milnward emerged from the vestry door; and, though too cognizant of the pastor's resolution against dining out of

his own doors on the sabbath-day to invite him to join their party at Deasmarsh, he did his utmost to persuade him to defer his morrow's journey, and become their guest.

But poor Jacob had little inducement, just then, to prolong his sojourn at home.

"I promised Lady Barton and my daughter," said he, "to be back by to-morrow morning; and they have made engagements, in consequence, that will hurry me away."

"At all events, you will not go by the early train?" inquired Mordaunt. "I have half-a-dozen things of more or less consequence to talk to you about."

Vaguely conjecturing that among these half dozen topics might be one connected with the singular ungraciousness testified towards him by his parishioners, the Rector readily undertook to postpone his departure till the afternoon. Before they took leave of each other at the churchyard turnstile, he had promised to breakfast at Deasmarsh.

Little did he surmise, good, honest man, that these things to be talked about "of more or less consequence" related solely to Mordaunt's son, and the public questions to which Mordaunt's son was bound hand and foot, at that moment, as stringently as Ixion to his wheel! With the inadvertent selfishness of the prosperous, his neighbour, the cotton-spinner, saw in him only a man who was come from the great Babylon where his son was achieving distinction by advocacy of the cause of the many against the iron hand of the few; and hungered and thirsted after the crumbs of praise which, in London, the Rector of Deaswold might possibly have picked up from the tables of greater men!

Even at the close of a meal far more resembling a dinner than the grandest attempts of the widow of the late celebrated,—even after the discussion of a guineafowl-pie *aux truffes* such as merited the approval of Chêvet, washed down by a cup of Mocha that might have

cheered the jaded spirits of the most despond-ing Provisional going, Jacob found himself still wondering what his friend Mordaunt could have to say to him, to excuse an invitation to breakfast not extended to young Milnward.

Mrs. Mordaunt and her daughter inquired, with well assumed interest, whether Emma were "very gay in London?" to which he frankly answered "Gayer, poor child, than she had ever been in her life,—and a great favourite with Lady Barton"!—

And when Mrs. Mordaunt added, (prepared, perhaps, for an evasive answer,) "of course she has met with my son?" he replied with unsuspecting candour that "Mr. Reresby Mordaunt was at the exhibition of the Royal Academy with his daughter and her aunt, the very day before he left town."—

Had Matilda found courage to question the simple-minded pastor concerning Sir Herbert Glynne, she would probably have received an answer equally veracious and equally unsatis-

factory. But, as they had now breakfasted, and Jacob announced himself to have business at home preparatory to his departure for town, the master of the house proposed accompanying him back across the park.

"The shortest way, papa, is by Deasmill," observed Matilda.

"Quite as easy to cross by the East Lodge!" added Mrs. Mordaunt. "It seems an absurd prejudice, but, since that unfortunate event, I feel as great a horror of approaching Deasmill as the people hereabouts, whom Mrs. Clemson tells me she can hardly get near her to supply her with the necessaries of life."

Instead of answering, Mr. Mordaunt rose abruptly from table; but not before Jacob Cromer noted to his surprise a gesture of reproof escape him, as if to silence his wife. He was evidently distressed by the allusion to Deasmill and the "unfortunate event;" or rather, evidently expected that his guest would find it distressing.—

The Rector, the least mysterious of God's creatures, was beginning to feel grievously puzzled by these unaccountable mysteries.—Though previously of opinion that, in the course of his acquaintance with Deasmarsh, he had heard almost enough of the merits and abilities of the son and heir, it was absolutely a relief to him when, as they took their way together across the thymy herbage of the park, to the discomfiture of the beautiful flock of merinoes which the utilitarian cotton-spinner had chosen to substitute for deer,—instead of commencing the communication of a disagreeable nature, whatever it might be, which Jacob was vaguely anticipating,—Mordaunt suddenly burst forth into a new eulogium of the member for Castle Dangan!—

"I am told," said he, "that the effect of his maiden speech was electric—that it has made a wonderful sensation!—And I promise you, my dear friend, that an effective speech in parliament is twice the thing it used to be.

Formerly, a man spoke only as the organ of his party,—and parties consisted of the ins and outs. Now, an administration is composed of half a dozen factions, and the opposition, of a dozen: and every man is expected to deliver his peculiar opinion, even at the risk of creating a thirteenth. A logical summing-up of precedents is no longer accepted by way of argument; for, as we live in times that have no precedent in history, we must fain trust to instinct for our guidance."

"Or rather to the one unerring code of right and wrong!" added the Rector, as became his cloth.—

But Mordaunt was not thinking just then of right and wrong. He was thinking only of his son.—

"I am not an ambitious man," added he, "though I won't assert as roundly that I am not a proud one, when justifiable cause for pride presents itself. And I must say 'tis a thing to make a father hold up his head a

little higher than usual when, in days like these, in days when the breakers ahead are so strong that even experienced pilots look pale, a young man like Reresby Mordaunt—I might almost say a boy like Reresby Mordaunt—rushes to the helm and effects what the son of Lord Melfont, with his first-rate education, and four centuries of nobility to bolster his consequence in the eyes of the nation, might as well attempt, as to jump over Plinlimmon!—I say again, that I really think I may be excused for declaring I would not exchange my son for any other young man of his years in the three kingdoms!"—

The Rector replied, though in a dispirited tone of voice, nearly in the terms expected of him. But of so vain-glorious a companion, stalking across his beautiful park with the sunshine of prosperity gilding every feature, how was he afterwards to inquire whether he could resolve him why the old women of Deerwold crept away into their homesteads at his approach?—

As they drew near Deasmill, however, (for, in a truly conjugal spirit, the moment Mrs. Mordaunt suggested it as a place to be avoided, her husband scorned to take any other road,) the Rector, though he appeared to be lending an attentive ear to the holdings-forth of his neighbour upon Protection and Free trade, became so lost in reminiscences of the fatal spectacle which had grieved his heart at his last visit to the place, as unconsciously to lower his voice to a whisper, in delivering the monosyllables for which Mordaunt occasionally paused, as even a painstaking horse relaxes his speed for the stimulant of his master's voice.—He spoke faintly, and his face was as ghastly as his voice was faltering. No person who met them by the way could have surmised that their discussion was merely of a political nature.—

"Good bye, then, my dear Cromer!" said the cotton-spinner, when at length they reached the opening to the lane; "since I cannot per-

suade you to give us a whole day, good bye!—Let me hope that all I have been saying has produced some effect on your mind: and that when you see my young vagabond in town, you will impress on *him* the solemn lesson I have endeavoured to make clear to yourself."

And having heartily shaken hands with him, Mordaunt turned his steps towards home.—But poor Jacob, overcome by careful thoughts till his blood curdled in his veins, felt so unequal to proceed, that for a moment he leaned heavily for support against Clemson's palings; even at that moment of self-absorption, it struck him as a remarkable coincidence that, on raising his eyes, preparatory to proceeding on his road, they fell upon the hateful face of Ralph Drewe; who had been an unseen spectator of his parting with the master of Deasmarsh.

CHAPTER XIX.

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame,
Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!
SHAKSPEARE.

"But you should have told me, my dear! —You should have fully explained the circumstances and pretensions of the family at Deasmarsh Park!" remonstrated Lady Barton, in alluding, during her brother-in-law's absence, to their encounter with Reresby Mordaunt.

"I mentioned to you, dear aunt, if you remember," pleaded Emma, "that there was a family from whom I had received much kindness, residing within a mile of the Rectory."

"Yes—but you spoke of them as people who had made their fortune in business—

just as *I* should describe the retired haberdasher who lodges opposite! — You ought to have explained their immense wealth (in these times, wealth is consequence!) Above all, you should have stated that the son was in parliament."

"I fancied that you must have noticed his name in the Debates."

"Of course.—Who has *not?*—But how could I know it to be that of your country neighbour? — And now, when your father meets the family in Northamptonshire, and they naturally speak of their son as having been present at my conversazione, what will they think on learning that he was not even invited?"

"If you knew Reresby Mordaunt as well as I do, my dear aunt, you would feel how much he would be out of place in a party of elderly people," was Emma's over-candid reply.

"Elderly people, child!—You surely do

not expect personages of extraordinary celebrity to be boys and girls!" exclaimed her indignant aunt. "However, it is not yet too late. I shall give another party for the express purpose of inviting him. Nay, I am half inclined to make it a dinner-party— a *snug* little dinner!"

On which announcement, Emma, who, having some experience of the snug dinners of the widow of the "late celebrated," was able to contrast them with the noble hospitality of Deasmarsh, could hardly refrain from a shudder.

"It is for *your* sake, my dear, that I am inclined to take so much trouble," resumed Lady Barton, self-complacently. "A young man like Mr. Mordaunt is, under certain circumstances, a most desirable acquaintance."—

"Not for *me*, dear aunt!" replied Emma, hastily. "There are reasons which—that is— I have reason to be certain that — that Mr. Reresby Mordaunt has no desire for further intimacy."

"Ay, ay!—Exactly what all young ladies of your age say, or are bound to say, on such occasions. You did not wish me, if you remember, to invite your friend Mr. Settringham to my party."

"Only from his being so excessively tiresome"—

"Yet you saw how eagerly he accepted the invitation!" continued Lady Barton, disregarding her. "He came, I noticed, among the first, and stayed till the last."—

"Yes!—because Mr. Settringham is accustomed to —" Emma was all but betrayed into saying "stupid parties." But it was not difficult to modify the phrase into "the society of learned people."—

"As a country neighbour of Mr. Mordaunt's," added Lady Barton, "it might be as well perhaps to invite *him* to our dinner; for, not being a marrying man, it would take off any particularity in the invitation to your young friend."

"But my dear, dear aunt," pleaded Emma, warming with the annoyance of having the fickle Reresby singled out for attentions purporting to bring them together, "believe me, *one* is as little a marrying man as the other; that, if you are planning a match for me with either, you might as well invite Mohun Lāl or any of your Oriental protégés for the same purpose!"

Lady Barton's dry face relaxed into a demure smile.—She resolved, however, to take no further steps in the business till her brother-in-law's return from Deaswold. And when, accordingly, poor Jacob made his appearance, harassed by the perplexities of home, and overcome by the fatigue of his journey, ere he had time to brush the stain of travel from his coat or wash the dust from his mouth, his anxious hostess closeted him in the stuffy little room she called the "boodore," to direct his attention, by mysterious hints, to the broken spirits of his daughter, pre-

paratory to the disclosure of her projects.

"I am convinced there is something seriously the matter with the poor girl!" said she. "At her age, my dear sir, it is not natural for a young person to be so indifferent to the pastimes of life. On Saturday, my poor niece declined accompanying me to a charming and most edifying lecture on Catoptrics and Dioptrics at the Royal Institution, on pretence of disliking a crowd. And yesterday, after church, when Sir Grimwood Hopkinson, the learned Egyptian traveller, who lived five-and-twenty years in a cave (like St. John at Patmos), deciphering hieroglyphics, brought here the famous Bavarian Professor of Chemistry, Manixellius,—and, as there happened to be several eminent persons (as usual, on Sunday mornings) calling upon me, they sat for several hours discussing the transactions of the last meeting of the African Society, instead, I say, of evincing interest in so exciting a discus-

sion, Emma remained pale and cheerless in a corner, as though she were going to faint!"

"The heat of the day, probably," pleaded the Rector. "But may I ask, my dear madam, what you infer from all this?"

"That the dear child has something on her mind;—that she had formed some unfortunate attachment before she quitted Northamptonshire."

"I trust in Providence *not*!" replied Jacob, fervently; for, in the course of his hurried and heated journey Londonward, his thoughts had reverted from the strange conduct of his parishioners to the still stranger accusations of his brother which had produced such complete estrangement between them, — till his mind was distracted by painful surmises.

"So thoroughly am *I* convinced of it," persisted the prim aunt, overstepping even her convictions in the desire to honour the roof of the late celebrated with a snug little

dinner party, comprehending a meteoric member of parliament and the eldest son of an ancient baronet, "that I am bent upon inviting to dinner the object of her mysterious attachment."

"You know him then?—Emma has *admitted* that her affections are engaged?" said the Rector, his voice faltering from the sad conviction that his daughter had attached herself where hope there was none.

"She has said only so much in contradiction as maiden modesty required," simpered Lady Barton. "And, though I do not pretend to be of a romantic turn (which would be highly unbecoming the widow of a man devoted, like the late eminent Sir Nicholas Barton, to the cultivation of the physical sciences), there is so much that is recommendable, in a worldly point of view, in a match with this youthful Canning, as to justify any encouragement and assistance my niece's well-wishers are able to afford."

"Not for worlds, my dear, good sister-in-law!" exclaimed the distressed father, vainly endeavouring to regain his natural voice. "Forgive me for entreating you to do what the over-eager promptings of good-will too often render difficult—namely, let well alone!—Trust me, these young people would have found means of meeting before this, had the wish been mutual. And I ought to be thankful to the Almighty that it is not; my neighbour at Deasmarsh having, long ago, apprized me of his intention to establish his son brilliantly in life, by a marriage with the opulent daughter of his former partner."

"Ay, *long ago*, perhaps," persisted the officious lady, to whom a project of any kind afforded a novel excitement. "But now that the young man has distinguished himself in public life, the Man of Capital will grow more ambitious. He will want countenance—he will want connection;—and between the heiress of a brother cotton-spinner,

and the daughter of an ancient Northamptonshire family (niece of the late celebrated Sir Nicholas Barton), will hardly, I should imagine, hesitate!"

"Hardly, indeed!" reiterated Jacob, shaking his head. "But it would be a painful thing to me, my dear madam, considering the close intimacy and neighbourhood in which we live, to put his firmness to the proof. I must, therefore, earnestly entreat that you will attempt nothing further to bring the young people together."

Inexperienced in supplication, the Rector spoke more peremptorily than he was aware of; and unluckily the woman whose life was so uneventful instantly chose to convert her niece into a victim of parental injustice. "But for the false pride of her brother-in-law, the poor child might make an excellent match!"—

And from the day this crotchet entered her head, by incessant hints and mysterious allu-

sions to a subject so painful to one of the parties, and so alarming to the other, she contrived to render them both thoroughly uneasy.

Meanwhile, the individual who had reduced to gravity the laughing countenance of Emma Cromer, and was causing to her fond father such bitter moments of care,—to say nothing of other heartaches of his creation in Northamptonshire and elsewhere, — was as little mindful of his conquests as the greatest of the Cæsars. The stronger ambition of public distinction had fixed its hold upon his mind : and, womankind—tell it not in Gath—appeared almost as great an obstacle to his projects as the heavy baggage of an army.

Even the beautiful Countess of whose insolent air of prosperity and fashion poor Emma had been restlessly dreaming ever since their encounter at the National Gallery,—(convinced that Magdalen would be wrecked against *her* superior attractions, as *she* had been sacrificed to those of Magdalen,) de-

rived her chief consequence in his eyes from her intimacy with Lord Fauconberg, and the collision ensured him in Belgrave Square with the leading opinion-makers of the day.

Sir Herbert Glynne, who stood watching him afar off, no longer with anxiety but regret,—as a philosopher notes the transformations of some beautiful insect,—could not refrain sometimes, at odd moments, with the shaving-brush in his hand, or pushing across the less frequented paths of Kensington Gardens to satiate a love of exercise begotten by his uncouth habits of travel,—from soliloquizing over the moral decadence of his friend.

"After all," muttered he, "I'm afraid a roc's egg is easier to find, than a fellow of *really* liberal opinions!—So long as men have their Greek and Roman history by heart, and a tendency to verse-making at the neb of their pen,—amazing in what magnanimities they indulge!—But if laurel-wreaths were

devised to hide the bald head of a victorious emperor, they have done far severer duty in fostering the sprouting of ass's ears!—What a fine fellow was Reresby at Eton!—what a fine fellow when we used to cleave the blue waters together every morning, towards Mitylene, before we started for the East!—What a second-sight of glorious emotions and achievements revealed itself to his nature!—And to have subsided already into a mere lord-hunting, lady-rhyming young man about town!—I have seen him dance attendance, side by side with that cornet-à-piston Lord Richard Lovell, upon Lady Bel.; who hesitated to *which* to give her arm, just as she might puzzle herself to which of her footmen to entrust her lapdog!—

"But why feel surprised at *his* sinking into pigmyhood," he would continue, taking larger strides both in his walk and monologue, as his irritation increased,—"after seeing even his parents,—even that robust-

minded old father and seemingly upright mother, — the moment they had conquered an independence entitling them to form a position for themselves,—a position where the transitions of modern society afford good ground where the altars of true gods might be erected,—truckle to ennobled lumps of clay like the Melfonts, and fancy themselves doing enough for their daughter by buying her way into the peerage!—Alack for human nature!—Let our missionary societies expend millions in putting down idolatry in the East, and destroying among the Hottentots the worship of Mumbo-Jumbo! — But between idolatry of the Golden Calf on the part of great people, and adoration of great people among the children of Mammon, hang me if the first and second commandment be not oftener broken in the West end of London, than on the banks of either Ganges or Gambia!"—

Sir Herbert's disgust at the subservience of his friend in Belgrave Square was however

accidentally modified.—Overtaken one day in Kensington Gardens by the curiosity-monger, Lady Madrepore, he found himself inextricably seized upon as an auditor, till the nearest gate afforded opportunity for escape.

"Admit, my dear Sir Herbert,"—cried she, the moment she brought herself abreast of the panting fugitive,—"admit that, after all, I was right!—The papyrus your friend Mr. Mordaunt was good enough to bring me from Dendera,—"

"Which he bought at a curiosity-shop in Compton Street, in order to preserve his own collection from pillage—" mentally added Sir Herbert.—

"*Does* contain," resumed the museum-loving lady, "an account of the expedition into Persia of Rameses the Great, vulgarly known in history by the name of Sesostris!—Such was the opinion of Champollion, by whom the papyrus in question was examined before it left Egypt; and such the opinion of

Klaproth and Kosegarten. And though Satorlini, Rosellini, and Nestor L'Hôte had their doubts on the subject, what were they, after all, but mere theorists, by the side of the great Champollion!"

"Too bad of Mordaunt," mused Sir Herbert, laughing in his sleeve,—"to have hoaxed this foolish woman at the expense of men so eminent!"—

"But my misgivings are now cleared up," added Lady Madrepore, with an air of gratified conviction. "Professor Slidderbottom of New York, (a neophyte of the remarkable school founded by Gliddon) who is now actually on his way to Berlin to consult Dr. Lepsius, and one of the most learned Egyptologists of the day, has seen my papyrus and confirmed the judgment of Champollion!—I am at this moment on my way back from Kensington, where I have been to thank my friend Lady Barton, (widow of the late celebrated Sir Nicholas) by whose kindness Pro-

fessor Slidderbottom was brought to my soirée."

"A favour to be truly thankful for!"—replied Sir Herbert with a smile which the impetuous rarity-monger did not accept as ironical.

"A most worthy person is Lady Barton," resumed the talkative lady.—"I am indebted to her for several of my best autographs:—one, from the great Linnæus to Professor Snitzenheim of Heidelberg, enclosing a rare specimen of the Icelandic flea; and another from the renowned John Tradescant, of which the ink is so pale that you cannot decipher a syllable except by chemical process."

"A valuable document, certainly. If all Lady Barton's treasures be equally available—"

"You would speak of them with more deference, perhaps," interrupted his companion, "had you seen the charming girl, who, in addition to Professor Slidderbottom, accompanied her to my *olla podrida*. But,

perhaps, you know Lady Barton's niece?—for there seems to be a vast intimacy between her and your handsome friend, young Mordaunt!"

"Indeed?—I understood from public report, which is good enough to trouble itself occasionally with his affairs, that his chief intimacy with the frailer sex was in the person of my cousin Lady Belvedere?"—

"*Was* and is are two different tenses!" rejoined Lady Madrepore.

"At this season of the year, you know, (as my friend little Hayward says) intimacies melt like ices.—*A la fin, tout casse, tout passe, et tout lasse!*"

"And how long, pray, have things been 'broken' between Lady Bel. and the Honourable member of Castle Dangan?"

"Broken? Oh! pray don't quote *me* as your authority. I am not aware of having said anything of the kind.—But certainly dear Lady Bel. did seem a *little* surprised that an insignificant girl like Miss Cromer

should engross so much of her *preux chevalier's* attention the other night at my house;— where they sat talking together in a window-seat the whole time the New Zealand chiefs were chanting their hymn!"—

"Flat blasphemy!" exclaimed Sir Herbert.

"And she was so urgent last night when I mentioned (as we were coming away from Lady Drax's concert,) that I was to call at Kensington to-day about my papyrus, that I should drop in at Belgrave Square on my return and give her the particulars of my visit, that I can't help fancying the fair widow is the least in the world jealous."

"Lord Fauconberg's Madonna Laura *jealous* of a country Miss?"—

"My dear, dear Sir Herbert!—in what hermitage have you been hiding your head for the last fortnight, not to know that Lord Fauconberg is going to be married to a lump of virgin gold,—a Welch heiress, with a slate quarry, and the mountain where all the famous

mutton comes from, for her dowry?—Twelve thousand a-year,—and not an idea in the world!"—

"An heiress and a simpleton!—I wonder whether there are more of them where she grew?"—

"*Entre nous*," continued Lady Madrepore, "the world *does* say that Fauconberg took umbrage at the favour with which the new member was received in Belgrave Square. But that, instead of mourning in black and white, he wisely adopted Hymen's saffron robe."

"Why surely no one, even in this wonderfully clever century, was ass enough to conceive that a man so prudent in his generation as Fauconberg looked for anything in Belgrave Square beyond an excellent *restaurant*, with a handsome *dame de comptoir?*"—

"Oh! fie, fie!—what chivalry! what—"

"Disgraceful,—is it not?—But tell me, my dear madam, what report are you conveying

to Lady Belvedere concerning the *jolie fille du Faubourg?*"—

"Only what you probably know by heart, as you are sometimes the guest of his father,—that *hers* is the parson of the Mordaunts' parish."

"And are such uninteresting despatches worth taking your horses so far out of the way as Belgrave Square?"

"Hardly, I admit!—But Lady Belvedere promised me a charming *cadeau*, if I would take the trouble of calling!—What do you say to an enamelled *bonbonnière* with a Petitot in the lid—said to be the very one in which the celebrated Maréchale de l'Hôpital, formerly Marie Mignot, used to offer *dragées* every day to Casimir, King of Poland, while coaxing him into an offer of his hand?"—

"What do I *say?*—Why that Lady Bel. pays as largely for priority of information as the Times or Journal des Débats!—Should

you find her at home, pray tell her I will acquaint her, for half the money, of more than all she wants to know concerning the birth, parentage, and education of Emma Cromer."

Sir Herbert would have accomplished her ladyship's purpose far better, however, could he have satisfied her curiosity concerning the subject of her *tête-à-tête* with Reresby Mordaunt at the conversazione of Lady Madrepore. For plain enough to all present was the emotion betrayed in the countenances of both, when, in his anxiety to obtain intelligence concerning Magdalen, and unwitting of the estrangement that had sprung up between the Hall and the Rectory, he inquired "what news her father had brought from the country concerning the family at Deasmarsh, and what news of his own?"—

Indignant at his audacity, Emma fixed her eyes upon him with an intentness purporting

to convert him into marble; but which had only the effect of making the conscious young man blush scarlet, as she replied—"You allude, no doubt, to my cousin Maglen? My father did not see her during his trip to Deaswold. The two families no longer meet. An idle village rumour relative to some mysterious meetings at Deasmill, last winter, produced a serious misunderstanding between my father and uncle."

"I was not aware that they had quarrelled. But I fancy Mr. Cromer of the Hall is a pertinacious, irritable man," said Reresby, looking as uneasy as his worst enemy could desire.

"Irritable indeed!—My poor cousin has a sad time of it!" resumed Emma, almost sternly. "Though papa did not *see* her, he was told by the gentleman who has taken his duty that she is looking wretchedly,—and no longer the same person as when last autumn, at the close of the shooting season,

she was so beset by your and Sir Herbert Glynne's pointers!"—

"She could afford *that*:—for *then*, she was the loveliest creature I ever beheld!"—said Reresby, beginning to suspect that his little plaything of former days was taking the liberty of talking at him.—

And for a moment Emma was startled out of her self-possession.

"There is much to render poor dear Magdalen unhappy at home," she continued, after a moment's pause.—"No friend,—no companion,—no sympathy in her own family—"

At which announcement, the assumed coolness of Reresby gave place to manifestations of anxiety.—

"And now that the displeasure of her father and mother has broken all bounds," continued Emma, watching his changes of countenance, which almost mollified her resentment, "I fear she leads a wretched life."—

"It is some time," stammered Reresby, fancying she paused for a reply, "since I heard news of Cromer Hall."

"And if you *had*, the domestic history of so insignificant a family as ours is scarcely likely, I fear, to engage your attention," was Emma's supercilious rejoinder. "Still I fancied that from the circumstance of your brother being at Cambridge—"

"I have not seen him since the autumn. —Tom spent the vacation at Burtsmill."—

"In that case," resumed Miss Cromer, a little subdued, "you are not likely to have heard of my cousin Stephen's rustication; since which, he has been living at home;—disquieting his family as much by his ill-temper, as, when at College, by his ill-conduct."—

"And to the despotism of this ill-conditioned brute is my poor Magdalen hourly exposed!" mused Reresby. And, for a moment, he felt ashamed of his too-ready abdi-

cation of independence; and resolved to obtain from his father, if not exemption from his promise, at least permission to communicate more freely with her to whom, in all honour and faith, he had plighted his troth.—

Such was the true origin of those demonstrations of emotion on the part of the young couple, which more discerning persons than Emma's chaperon might have been excused for attributing to the impulses of secret attachment.—

"I can promise you, my dear sir," said Lady Barton to the Rector, after a florid description of this party, from which his instinctive horror of blueism had caused him to absent himself,—"I can promise you that the attentions of Mr. Beresby Mordaunt to my niece are the theme of general observation. Professor Slidderbottom inquired whether they were not engaged lovers. Nay, I received congratulations on the subject from more than

one of those illustrious friends of the late Sir Nicholas who frequent Lady Madrepore's coterie."

Jacob replied only by a heavy sigh. Grievous was it to his affectionate and candid nature to apprehend that the child of his heart had been deceiving him.—The seemingly guileless manner in which Emma had replied to the inquiries prompted by the Squire's malicious report, had completely satisfied his honest confiding mind. But now that the disinterested testimony of Lady Barton concerning the origin of Emma's repinings at Deaswold and fretfulness in town, — of her wasted form and altered countenance,—and, above all, of the evident understanding subsisting between her and Mordaunt, afforded such undeniable grounds of suspicion, he was doubtful only whether to hazard an appeal to the love and duty of his child; or wait till the reaction of her natural instincts of affection recalled to

her young mind that no human protection, —no human attachment,—can ever rival the love with which "a father pitieth his own children!"—

CHAPTER XX.

As the poor frighted deer, that stands at gaze,
Wildly determining which way to fly,
Or one encompass'd with a winding maze,
That cannot tread the way out readily,
So with herself is she in mutiny,
To live or die, which of the twain were better,
When Life is sham'd, and Death Reproach's debtor.
SHAKSPEARE.

The situation of Magdalen meanwhile was fully as deserving of compassion as her cousin had described it. Over *her* destinies, no doating father extended the protection of his prayers; nor did a single ray of this world's sunshine intervene to lighten the dreariness of her fate. Nay, she was regarded at the Hall as one who afforded neither pleasure nor profit, and on whom a

vast deal of useless accomplishment had been thrown away.

The Squire, indeed, indulged in a vague kind of conviction that it was all the fault of the cotton-spinner;—that, had not his daughter been outblazed by the superior advantages of dress and fortune enjoyed by Matilda Mordaunt, the son of Lord Melfont might have bent his knee at Cromer Hall, instead of Deasmarsh Park. But he did nothing to improve her opportunities of mixing with the world. Every year, he saw less and less of his country neighbours; unable to pardon their intimacy with the Mordaunts, and unwilling to bring his meagre cheer into comparison with the prodigal hospitality of the *novus homo*.

But it was not solace from without that was wanting to Magdalen. To join the finest archery-meeting ever collected at Grovynor Chase, would not have afforded her a moment's satisfaction. Nothing comprised just

then within the limits of Northamptonshire, would have sufficed to quicken the current of her blood. Amidst the domestic storms evoked at the Hall by the misconduct of her elder brother, and the audacity with which, as heir in tail to an unalienable property, he stood his ground against the irate Squire, she maintained the same unnatural apathy, the same oppression of body and mind, which had hung over her ever since she became aware of the unjust aspersions she had caused to attach to her innocent cousin, and the unbrotherly feud she had provoked between her father and uncle.

Of the dreadful discovery since made at Deasmill, less had reached her, perhaps, than any other person in the parish. Before a girl of her years, it was not likely to be canvassed: accident alone having rendered her cousin Emma cognizant of the circumstance. She was vaguely aware that an inquest had been held in the village on the

body of a child supposed to have been murdered. But, on hazarding an inquiry concerning the verdict, had been too roughly silenced by her brother to revert to the subject.

Though debarred from all intercourse with the Rector, she seemed to feel a sort of solace and support so long as her uncle and cousin remained in the country; and on learning their sudden journey to London, all courage forsook her heart. The weedy, ill-kept shrubberies, in which she was accustomed to loiter away hour after hour, chiefly to escape the surly company of her brother Stephen, who seemed to take pleasure in venting upon the feeblest thing within reach the ill-humour engendered by his father's reproaches, seemed suddenly to have become too lonely for endurance; and one afternoon, when the Squire and his son had proceeded on the pony and the old bay mare to Basinghill, for the despatch of turnpike business with Aristobulus Settringham, she took one of those desperate resolu-

tions that sometimes dart like a knife into the breasts of the unhappy, and hurried through the plantations and down the green lane to Deasmill!—

Some latent hope was in her soul that Reresby might have broken the promise extorted by his father (which he had announced in the letter conveyed to her hands after much difficulty and delay, by Mrs. Clemson), that, as miserable as herself, *like* herself, his powers of patience might be exhausted. Perhaps, *perhaps* he had written again!—Perhaps a precious letter might be waiting for her at Deasmill!—

With every pulse in her frame throbbing from fear and excitement, she skimmed along the green lane: pausing ever and anon to listen whether, amid the hum of summer insects, the rustling of birds in the hedges, and reptiles startled away amid the long grass of the high embankment, no sound was discernible of other footsteps than her own!

But

> The beating of her own heart
> Was all the sound she heard!—

No one was at hand but the troubled girl, who had visited the spot so much too often for her peace.

Had any unseen spectator witnessed the look of anguish with which Magdalen Cromer surveyed the scene of her former happiness,—the spot on which, for months, she had not ventured to feast her eyes,—the emotion that filled them with unshed tears, and caused her finely-formed lips to tremble, might possibly have been connected with the tragedy by which that fatal spot was made memorable in the eyes of the village. For though the remorse of her innocent heart was as different from the dark shadow that dogs the steps of crime as the briar-rose from the deadly nightshade with which it intermingles its bloom, the beautiful face of Magdalen was as pale, and her gait as irresolute, as though, indeed,

she were approaching a spot which blood-guiltiness rendered terrible to her soul.

Scarcely had she courage to turn the latch of the Clemsons' garden-gate;—scarcely self-possession to note the neglected aspect of the place, so smiling with flowers the preceding summer! The sound of coming footsteps, however, now rare at Deasmill, had already brought poor Mrs. Clemson to the threshold of her deserted house; and in *her* appearance, at least, the change was not to be overlooked.

No sooner did the old lady recognize her visitor, than her hands were outspread to motion her back.

"Oh! Miss Magdalen, Miss Magdalen!" said she, when, instead of obeying the signal, the anxious girl glided forward to express sympathy in her indisposition,—"don't come here, my dear! Don't do yourself no further mischief by venturing again to this fated place!"

"I should have been here long ago, had I guessed you were ill," replied Miss Cromer, who made no movement to retire. "But, having found myself watched at my last visit, I did not dare return."

"Right, my dear young lady, quite right! But you should not be here *now!*—Harm enough has come of your visits already."—

"Not to you, I hope, my kind friend!" rejoined Magdalen, taking between her own the old woman's wasted hand.

"Ay, both to me and mine, and you and yours!" she replied, mournfully shaking her head, while retreating hurriedly into her house, so as to draw in with her the guest whom a moment before she had warned to depart. "And *that* it is, Miss Magdalen, which is carrying me down to my grave! For 'tis a hard thing to have lived without reproach till the hairs are gray upon one's head; and then, find one's neighbour's turn their backs upon one. And if so be the

wicked tongues which have so troubled themselves about us was to see you here, my dear, at this moment—"

"I came only," replied Magdalen, faintly, (overpowered at finding herself once more in that well-remembered room) "I came only to thank you for the letter which, some time ago, I received, thanks to your interference;—and to inquire," added she, in a lower voice, "whether, perhaps, another might not have reached you from the same quarter?"—

"How should a letter reach me *now?*" cried the old lady, with sudden sternness. "Mr. Reresby's been gone from Deasmarsh for months and months; and out of sight's out of mind, as maybe you've found to your cost, Miss Magdalen; for you look sadly ill, my dear, and not what you used, when the brisk air, last autumn, brought brightness into your face."

"I have not been very well, or very happy," added Miss Cromer, as if to deprecate any

feeling of animosity against her on the part of her hostess.

"If I'd only known, my dear young lady," returned the old woman, a little moved by the plaintive tones of her voice, "where to have addressed Mr. Reresby in Lon'on (which is so vast a place that, even though a parliament man, my letter might be slow of reaching him), I should have made bold to write, to let him know the trouble we've got into on his account. But I didn't like to try and find out at Deasmarsh; first, for fear he might think it was compensation I wanted;—but, most of all, from the great anxiety he always showed that nothing should be known in his family of his acquaintance with yourself."

"He was, indeed, always sadly in fear of discovery!" said Magdalen, with a desponding waive of the head.

"Seeing which, I hadn't heart to write. And now that Miss Matilda and her mamma

have ceased to set foot in the place, I've no longer no chance of hearing anything of him, no more than yourself. And rightly I'm served, God knows, for meddling and making in what I knew to be wrong, but hadn't the heart to refuse to the boy I'd dandled on my knee! To be sure neither he, nor I, nor no one could give a guess how black matters would turn out, and to what wicked lies they'd give rise. Not on *your* account, Miss Magdalen, but your poor cousin's; who lay senseless in this very room, on yonder bed, from only looking at the corpse:—little thinking, poor lamb, what evil thoughts her tenderheartedness was giving rise to: and how even her own flesh and blood, her own natural uncle, if natural he can be called—"

"I thought," interrupted a gruff voice, so near them as to cause both Mrs. Clemson and her guest to start and tremble, "I thought, wife, I'd made my will plain understood as I wouldn't have no more young ladies a tam-

perin' under my roof?"—grumbled old Clemson, who had entered the room unobserved, attracted by the unusual sound of conversation within his doors. "Haven't we had trouble and shame enow already?"—

"Miss Cromer hasn't set foot in this house these six months, Thomas," pleaded the embarrassed wife.

"And bad's the luck she ever set foot in it at all!"—cried Clemson, striking his staff on the ground. "I don't want to think no harm o' no un, nor to say no harm o' no un. But whether the young lady have a right to look honest folks in the face, or whether she han't, if ever she darkens *my* doors again, I'd have her to know *my* leave'll be wantin'!"—

Though unable to divine the cause of his indignation, there scarcely needed this hint to hasten Magdalen from the house. Of her former visits to Deasmill, he had manifested no disapproval; and fifty murdered infants found in the Deas would not have instigated

a surmise in *her* mind that such an event could be connected by the wildest scandal-monger with her own name or her cousin's. But, on taking her trembling way across the lane back to her father's plantations, inexpressibly humiliated by the consciousness of expulsion from the spot to which she had been heretofore welcomed with reverence and affection, it occurred to her that, in spite of Mrs. Clemson's protestations, she might know more of the proceedings of Reresby than she chose to avow.

"It was for *his* sake, only, they were kind to me," murmured she; "and it is because aware that he has grown indifferent, they receive me thus roughly. Yes! even *he* has abandoned me;—and what now remains to comfort me for my breach of duty towards my parents, and the forfeiture of my self-respect?"—

Of the malicious rumours which had long caused her village-pensioners to look so sad,

and the old people whom she sometimes stopped by the way to inquire after their infirmities, to answer in blunt monosyllables, how was a being so innocent as Magdalen to conjecture the origin?—That the blackest suspicions rested upon her young cousin, and that the piece of silk found round the throat of the dead infant at Deasmill (having been recognized as the fragment of a handkerchief often seen in the hands of her brother Stephen,) pointed her out as the supposed confederate and accomplice of the guiltless Emma, was the last thing likely to reach her ears. And though a thousand trifles tended to substantiate the suspicions of the evil-minded of Deaswold,—the feud between the two brothers,—the enforced separation between the two cousins,—the devotions of the Cromer Hall family transferred to Basinghill as a security against any accidental encounter,—and finally the departure of the delinquent for London, unable longer to face the murmurs

of the parish,—to Magdalen, all this was as non-existent as, to an ordinary wanderer over the earth's surface, the unexplored mines under his feet.

In the despondency of her solitary grief, often did she pray for early death,—often wish that she was lying beside her sisters in a grave where those who had rejected and deserted her would never bend their careless way. The sight of Deasmarsh in all its brilliant sunshine of prosperity was becoming almost as hateful to *her* eyes as to those of her father. The name of Mordaunt sounded in her ears as that of an enemy. The thought of worldly riches became pain and grief to her; convinced that they had hardened against her the heart at one time so fondly her own. The denunciations of Scripture against the rich man rose unconsciously to her lips; and the worthy cotton-spinner who, if released from his engagements with the Freshleys and cognizant of her sincere affection for his son,

would have taken Magdalen to his heart as a daughter-in-law had she been the offspring of the Clemsons or the poorest cotter of Deaswold, instead of its lord of the manor, existed in her mind as a son of pride and perdition, predestined to the doom of Dives!—

Though the sullen enmity subsisting between Mr. Cromer and his prodigal son rendered their meals as taciturn as those of La Trappe, when the Squire occasionally broke silence to recount some new trait of prodigality on the part of the upstarts at Deasmarsh, Magdalen no longer uplifted her voice in gentle vindication,—no longer ventured to depreciate the sources of his information. Even when the traits cited by her father of Mordaunt's pomps and vanities were not only improbable, but impossible, she made no rash avowals of incredulity. If the story were devoid of foundation, the proverb saith truly that "People lend only to the rich."—Such things were asserted but of the Mordaunts!—

Sometimes, indeed, the better instincts of her gentle nature prevailed; and she reproached herself for being less grateful than she ought to the Providence which extended around her the vernal glory of the woods, and to her careworn heart rendered the still watches of the night so pure and holy and refreshing; and at such moments as these, with tears of tenderness streaming down her face, she found it difficult to refrain from addressing a few lines, at all risks, to Reresby, and telling him of all she was suffering for his sake. The prohibitions of his father had no authority over *her*. Better she should put her destiny to the proof. Better appeal to the candour of her affianced husband.—If forgotten, better know it at once!—Six more months of her present state of misery and suspense would be worse than death.

More than once had she beguiled the loneliness of her forlorn hours by inditing such a letter; and more than once had it been

hastily destroyed, in the compunctious dread of causing an unhappy moment to Reresby, by transgressing his interdiction. Even when, at last, one, longer and fonder and more explicit than all the rest, had been redeemed from destruction as incapable of provoking his displeasure, how was it to be conveyed to the post,—the letter-bag for which passed invariably through the hands of her father? For Magdalen was of too noble a turn of mind to have confidants among the servants; nor had she ever ascertained by whose hand the packet despatched by Mrs. Clemson was placed in her chamber.

On one point, however, still more difficult to decide than the transmission of her despatch, she had thoroughly made up her mind. To the uncle, whose goodness she so fully appreciated,—the uncle, who had comforted her at the trying moment of parting from her sisters—she would confide the difficulties of her situation the moment he re-

turned to the country. In spite of whatever vengeance might fall upon her, should her father discover that they had met, she would contrive an interview with the Rector. If his advice did not avail to clear up her way before her, at least his kindly word would give her strength to bear on to the end.

The very resolution to unbosom what weighed so heavily on her mind, seemed to afford relief; and, with a more cheerful countenance than she had worn for months, she accompanied her family, one evening, to one of those summer tea-drinkings at Basinghill Manor, which constituted the dissipations of Cromer Hall.

Her father, though he made a standing grievance of such visits, had accepted in the present instance the Miss Moulsey's invitation; the ill-terms on which he lived with his son placing him sadly in want of listeners on whom to vent the paroxysms of rabid animosity engendered by the progressive en-

franchisement of trade, and the defeats of the Protectionists. Aristobulus Settringham might be an ass. But if the enjoyment of a small attachéship in the eighteenth century entitled him to fancy himself a diplomat, the proprietorship of seventy acres of arable land sufficed to constitute him a champion of the corn-laws. The Squire felt that it would be a comfort to hear even so small a voice crying "Amen" to his diatribes against the uncountry-gentlemanlike politics of Deasmarsh.

For, owing to the influence of the upstart cotton-spinner, meetings had been called in the district, and petitions signed, and all the screws and levers of the movement party brought into play.—Nay, according to the wild arraignment of the Squire, it was by *his* arguments the Lord Lieutenant had been seduced from his duty,—the county members converted from their opinions,—the people blinded,—the legislation deafened,—the world turned upside down.—The speech made by

Reresby Mordaunt, which all parties concurred in citing as a masterpiece of argument and oratory, the Squire did not hesitate to pronounce a Satanical inspiration, — a crocodile's egg laid in the sand by old Mordaunt, and brought to life by the fiendish incubation of his son.—

Scarcely had he patience to reply with fitting courtesy to the compliments of Miss Moulsey, or bestow the encomiums exacted by Miss Araminta on the brilliancy of her flowerbeds,—so eager was he to seize Aristobulus by the button, and launch forth into the jeremiads to which the ears of his family had become as much accustomed as to the cawing of his rookery.

But alas! for his powers of self-government, the man in whose density of intellect his soul trusted as companion with his own, had enlisted, at that epoch of sudden conversions, under the banner of the enemy!—Betwixt the Thursday morning and Friday night, the ar-

rival of his cousin Mr. Settringham from town, with tidings of the hopelessness of the cause to the skirts of which Aristobulus had pinned with a minnikin pin his very diminutive adhesion, had sufficed to enlist him among those *gros bataillons* which Providence is said to favour!—

When Aristobulus adverted, in answer to one of Mr. Cromer's explosions of wrath against the advocates of Corn-law emancipation, to the luminous speech of the young member for Castle Dangan, he probably calculated on the impunity of being housed on the ground-floor, with windows opening to the lawn: — so pugnacious was the attitude and so defying the countenance of the Squire.

"The truth is, my dear ma'am," continued the ex-diplomat, turning, secure of their suffrage, towards the two spinsters with whose affections he was accustomed to trifle alternately, like Horace Walpole with others of higher note, —"we must take the colour of

our opinions from the times we live in.—We must not seek our political principles in our own pockets. — We must not point to a rent-roll for the exposition of a creed. — We must look to the convictions of the country, the *necessities* of the country! — The dumb have been taught to speak, — and the deaf must be made to hear. — Reluctantly, therefore, but with conscientious self-abnegation, I trample my interests under foot, and proclaim myself a Free trader."—

A mere paraphrase of the words of Reresby Mordaunt! — And yet the two spinsters in whose sight Deasmarsh and its inhabitants were an abomination, misled by habitual deference to the infallibility of their village Pope, kept nodding approval with hands and head, like a couple of China mandarins.

"I am not altogether hopeless, my dear Mr. Cromer," added Aristobulus, turning with an air of magnanimous superiority towards the Squire—"of seeing you become a conver

to our cause. — I find from my cousin that young Mordaunt has already made proof of his eloquence, by bringing round to his opinions *one* member of your family."—

Already bursting with rage, to find himself lumped with his brother the parson appeared the unkindest cut of all! And so desirous was the Squire to convey his sentiments of disgust at the liberty taken with him by such a junction in the strongest and most comprehensive words, that, baulked by his ambition, he said nothing.—

"Settringham informs me," added Aristobulus, taking advantage of his "fix," "that he met our friend Jacob repeatedly in town; though, from my previous knowledge of your quiet brother, I confess I never should have suspected him of frequenting the chaos worse confounded which my well-beloved cousin is pleased to call the world of letters."—

"And Miss Emma?" — inquired Araminta Moulsey, regardless of the indignation that

appeared to be working like barm in the bosom of the Squire.

"Oh! Miss Emma,—to the honour of her luck or her discernment,"—added Aristobulus facetiously,—"has drawn the *gros lot*,—the thirty thousand pounds prize.—It appears that young Mordaunt, who is now one of the stars of the day, never leaves her side.—The young couple are inseparable."—

"I guessed as much!"—cried the Squire, concentrating his long-repressed wrath into a single explosion,—"I guessed it from the cold-blooded effrontery with which my brother denied the existence of any understanding between them,—and the girl herself rebutted my charge of having met the unprincipled scamp secretly at Deasmill!"—

"*At Deasmill?*"—reiterated the two spinsters and their weazened beau,—for whom, as for all the neighbourhood, the very name of that ill-starred spot had acquired a lugubrious significance.—

"Ay—last autumn, — day after day, — in the deserted mill!"—cried Mr. Cromer, almost incoherent from passion. — "The very place where my brother or his daughter hit upon the body of a murdered child! — But, as others besides myself remarked on the occasion, 'those who hide can find.'"

"My dear Mr. Cromer," argued his wife in a tone of plaintive remonstrance—"you forget that Magdalen is present!"—

Not more, however, than the rest of the party had forgotten it! — And when, on Mrs. Cromer's hint, the elder of the two spinsters turned towards the window near which Magdalen had placed herself, as if to inhale the fragrance of a flower-garden as choice as the flower-gardens of spinsters are apt to be, to beg she would draw her chair nearer to the tea-table,—a loud exclamation drew the attention of all present towards the poor girl who, speechless and pale as ashes, sat as if stricken with palsy.

By Araminta and her sister, not a little shocked at the indiscreet allusions which the Squire had hazarded in their presence so as to " break the good meeting with most admired disorder," her sudden indisposition was naturally attributed to horror at hearing her cousin Emma so cruelly spoken of.—

" Poor girl,—poor girl!"—whispered they —after hartshorn, ether, and sal-volatile had been offered without producing the smallest effect in restoring colour to her cheek or meaning to her eye;—" she is too delicate and tender-hearted to be dealt with after justice-room fashion!—But Mr. Cromer is a sadly coarse-minded man.—Mr. Cromer was never intended by Providence for contact with the more delicate sex!"—

And as soon as the carriage, re-ordered in haste, had conveyed away the tyrant and the tyrannized, Aristobulus, flattering himself that conviction rather than indignation had produced the silence of the out-argued

Squire, added with a conscious smile that, "If unfitted by nature for female society, his worthy neighbour the Squire was quite as little qualified for contact with men of cultivated understanding,—extensive information,—and knowledge of the world. Mr. Cromer, for instance, would never have been a moment tolerated in the responsible and noble vocation of a diplomatic career!"—

And mechanically, the long-practised echoes of Basinghill Cottage replied—"the responsible and noble vocation of a diplomatic career!"—

CHAPTER XXI.

—— With pleasures too refin'd to please,
With too much spirit to be e'er at ease,
With too much quickness ever to be taught,
With too much thinking to have common thought,
Purchasing pain with all that joy can give,
She dies of nothing but the rage to live.

POPE.

The heir-apparent of Settringham Abbey, too dull a man not to see clearly and report with exactness, had told nothing but the truth. Every time he was in company in London with his Northamptonshire neighbours, he had noticed Reresby Mordaunt and Emma engaged in earnest conversation.

For no sooner had the warm-hearted girl wrought upon him to avow the sincerity of his devotion to her cousin, than the generosity

of her heart thawed like a well-spring at the first genial gleam of Spring. A few earnest words of explanation on both sides led to an expansion of mutual confidence; and those who, at one time had narrowly risked becoming lovers, became readily friends.—

The affectionate enthusiasm with which Emma spoke of his cousin tended to the revival of impressions in some little danger of becoming obliterated by the all-effacing tides and currents of London engagements; and, on seeing him really and deeply affected by her picture of Magdalen's position at Cromer Hall, the spirit of the worthy Jacob broke forth in his daughter, and she pledged herself to take an early opportunity, on her return to Deaswold, to explain all to her cousin, and satisfy her how truly she was beloved.

On learning, however, from Reresby the strenuousness of Mr. Mordaunt's opposition to the match, she rescinded her first proposal that her

father should be taken into their councils. Emma was aware that the Rector considered it essential to the well-being of his parish that he should remain on friendly terms with his powerful parishioner; and it would have been hardly fair to embroil them, in order to promote the interests of the lovers. Time enough, at all events, to take the good parson into their confidence, after ascertaining from Magdalen whether there existed the smallest hope of reconciliation between the Rectory and Hall!—

There was consequently some ground for the parental uneasiness with which Jacob Cromer noted the progress of an intimacy which he regarded only as a second sowing of the tares he had been at so much pains to eradicate. To what purpose his journey to town, if he were fated to take back to Deaswold a doubly-repining daughter!—

Unspeakable was the vexation with which he watched the manœuvres of the widow of

the late celebrated to get her niece invited to Lady Belvedere and chaperoned by Lady Madrepore, for the sole purpose of being placed in the way of Reresby Mordaunt;—but, debarred by gratitude for her kindness towards his daughter from remonstrating with all the unction he would fain have exercised, she contrived to have her own way.

"The Countess of Belvedere may be a little flighty," said she, in answer to his arguments. "But she is a woman not only of the highest rank and fashion but the highest influence; and, should our dear Emma marry and settle in town, will be of the greatest service in introducing her into society."

In vain did the good man protest against the likelihood of such an alliance as she foresaw; in vain assure her that, if married, her husband would be the person to establish his daughter suitably in the world.—The prim little widow drew so largely upon her stock

of plausibility to convince him that it was the duty of her only sister's widower to submit to her guidance in matters concerning the worldly welfare of her niece, that, with a heavy sigh, he consented to her being hooked for a single evening to the wing of the curiosity-monger.

It is true that, when dressed for Lady Belvedere's party and her countenance animated by the hope that she was about to assist in securing the happiness of the cousin she loved so dearly, Emma looked so much prettier and happier than he had seen her for the last twelve months, that the fond father almost forgot his scruples. Moreover, the day was now fixed for their return to the country; and though the idea of home wore a less smiling aspect than heretofore, the Rector armed himself against all unpleasant impressions by a determination that, once more alone with his daughter, he would overlook the feelings of delicacy which had determined

him to await her voluntary confidence; and come to such explanations with her on the subject of Deasmarsh and its heir, as must remove the burthen of cares under which he was labouring.

"We who love each other so truly," mused he, when the carriage containing his heart's treasure had driven from the door,—"we, who are all in all to each other, and but little I fear to the rest of our fellow-creatures, —should be unpardonable if, for want of the courage to appeal to each other's feelings, we allowed clouds to obscure the perfect confidence that ought to exist between father and child."—

Had Emma, on the other hand, surmised that she was included in Lady Madrepore's invitation to the *soirée* in Belgrave Square only to gratify the curiosity of a whimsical Countess, her pride (not the Cromer pride of belonging to "an old county family," but the pride of petulant girlhood) would have

prevented her accepting the invitation. But, thoughtless as she was warm-hearted, it occurred to *her* as little that her intimacy with Reresby could provoke the jealousy of his fashionable friends, as that it could excite the anxieties of her father; and the pleasure of finding herself in the midst of the most brilliant assemblage she had seen in London, —an assemblage differing as widely from the grotesque and solemn coterie of the widow of the "late celebrated" as the brilliant flower-beds of Chiswick from the herbary of the physic garden at Chelsea,—so brightened her young and lovely face, that there was some pretext for the swelling nostril and curling lip with which the jealous hostess observed how coolly, (immediately after her entrance and the ceremonies of introduction,) the protégée of Lady Madrepore took the arm of the Honourable member for Castle Dangan, and disappeared with him into the refreshment-room.—

"Paired off for the remainder of the session!"—observed Sir Herbert Glynne, an amused spectator of his noble cousin's astonishment.—"For a country-girl, the *coup de main* is really not *amiss!*"—

"I thought I understood her to be a Miss Cromer?"—observed Lord Richard Lovell, who was standing by and seldom understood things but by halves.

"At all events, a very pretty girl," echoed his Shadow, rightly interpreting the look of admiration with which Lord Richard was following with his eyes the buoyant movements of the happy girl.—And on seeing her and Reresby courteously accosted by the Grovynor Grovynors whom they met by the way, the young Lord and his Shadow decided that the pretty girl with the brown ringlets and hazel eyes was a Northamptonshire belle, and therefore the country-neighbourhood perquisite of young Mordaunt.—

"Paired, but not matched, you think?"—

resumed Sir Herbert, aside to Lady Belvedere, as soon as the two young men had sauntered off for a nearer inspection of that which is hailed with such joy in one of the dead calms of fashionable life,—a new face, and a personage *sans antécédens*.—" *Que voulez vous !* —Birds of brightest plumage,—pheasant, peacock, or hoppo,—are addicted to the homeliest mates!—Do you remember, my dear Lady Bel., when you first desired me to present my friend Mordaunt to you, my telling you that he had a foible for a rustic Perdita ?"—

But the handsome Countess had become too experienced in the part of Ariadne, to allow her chagrin to become visible;—more especially to one possessed of so mocking a tongue as her cousin Herbert. Like most attractive women subject to no control but that of her whims and fancies, Lady Belvedere never trusted to the reality of her prepossession till the object of her preference had

escaped her. An object of general admiration, *l'embarras du choix* neutralized her privilege of election. So small was the share of the affections in influencing her conduct, and so much more dependant were her predilections on the choice of society than on her own, that, on her guard against the deceptions of a momentary vogue or usurped reputation, she could not concentrate on a single object those fascinations which, had warmth of feeling been compatible with their superficial charm, would have been indeed irresistible.

The foresight of her vanity inspired her with mistrust. Her dread of being disenchanted on the morrow, rendered her incapable of enjoying to-day. *Less* beautiful —*less* gifted,—*less* opulent, she would also have been less self-secure, and consequently more susceptible of lasting impressions.—But, amid the triumphs of her brilliant existence, she was one of the many destined to flutter

their way through the coquetries of successive seasons, — hurrying onwards to warm herself in the beams of a setting sun, till twilight apprized her that it was too late.—

Lord Fauconberg, who, for a time, had flattered himself of having encaged the Phœnix, and created a real attachment in her heart, had broken his chain with the firm energy of a high-minded man, on discovering that his devotedness was insufficient to prevent her wandering eye and rapacious vanity from straying in pursuit of the political lion of the day; and Reresby himself, who, though circumstances rendered impossible any pretension to her hand, had been dazzled for a moment by the distinctions accorded him in Belgrave Square, no sooner saw her deserted by Lord Fauconberg, than the charm that seemed to invest her when honoured by the preference of one of the first men of the day, disappeared in a moment. Like the maiden in the goblin tale, who, by the sudden with-

drawal of the talisman which endows her with the semblance of life, becomes reconverted into a mass of clay, he turned from her almost with loathing.—To be abandoned by Lord Fauconberg, was a sufficient certificate of demerit.

"*Ainsi va le monde!*" mused Sir Herbert, when, in spite of the calls both on her courtesy and coquetry, as the hostess of so brilliant a circle, he saw his beautiful cousin have recourse to her *flacon*, her gorgeous fan à la Louis XIV., and a handkerchief adorned with filmy lace, to disguise the irritation of mind which *she* conceived to be tender emotion, produced by witnessing Reresby's degradation :—

> the eagle, in its pride of place,
> Thus by a mousing owl stooped at and killed.

"Another of the gorgeous glasses of fashion's magic lantern irretrievably cracked! —Alas! poor Lady Bel.—If, instead of wasting the best years of her life in moonraking, she

had fallen into the hands of a husband possessing common sense and uncommon good temper, what a charming woman might she have made!"

While still watching the incoherent words and gestures into which his noble kinswoman was betrayed byher desire to ascertain what was going on in the other room, he found himself suddenly harpooned by Lady Madrepore.

"Tell me, I entreat you, dear Sir Herbert," whispered she, in the most mysterious manner,—"you who are *l'ami de la maison*, —*which* is the great man!"—

"*What* great man?—Lord William Apreece, who was refused as too tall for the Life-Guards?"

"Don't be so provoking;—*you* know very well who I mean! Everybody, I find, is in the secret;—though he goes about in plain clothes, and would not dine with Lord Aberdeen lest he should be suspected."—

"Perhaps you would not object to tell me in plain words the name of the gentleman in plain clothes?"

"That is exactly what we are all dying to find out!—This is the first party he has been to. Lady Belvedere, who ought to take out a patent for getting proofs of everything and everybody *avant la lettre*, bespoke him before he landed!"—

Certain that, if time were allowed her, the wonder-monger would by degrees unravel her clue of rigmarole, Sir Herbert was not long in finding out that she had been made the object of a hoax. Cad Rowlandson, a chatterbox nearly as flighty as herself, had persuaded her that the lion of Lady Belvedere's party was a renegade Jesuit, an accredited spy of the Sultan, who had been despatched to London on a secret mission to keep watch over the proceedings of Ibrahim Pasha; and scarcely a man present whose face happened to be strange to her, and sufficiently mahogany

of complexion to avouch an Oriental origin, but was exposed to the annoyance of her scrutiny.

At length, having fixed, as the hero of her romance, upon a Brazilian *chargé d'affaires* sufficiently dun of visage to warrant the supposition that he was in the habit of taking baths of chocolate, she hurried off in search of her protégée, to communicate the discovery she had made; followed by Sir Herbert, not a little curious to hear the revisals and emendations she would make in her second edition of the story. Nor did the air of satisfaction with which she detected Emma and Reresby Mordaunt seated together in a niche of a vestibule opening to the refreshment-room, escape his observation.

"Conceive what an interesting creature we have here to-night, my dear Mr. Mordaunt!" cried she, pushing forward to accost them. "A young Jesuit, in whom the late pope had such confidence, that he was despatched by

his order to Constantinople as a missionary; where, instead of converting others, he became converted in his turn; but, from his origin, he was so much an object of suspicion among the Turks, that his only chance of securing his neck against the bowstring, was by becoming the accredited spy of the Seraglio!—Russia and Turkey, as I need not tell you, my dear Mr. Mordaunt, possess a *diplomatie sécrète* of *mouchards*, in addition to their *corps diplomatique accrédité*; and this Père Egidius (or, as he is called by the Mussulmans, Hassan Habaddon) has been secretly despatched to England, to protect the interests of the Porte against the intrigues of the Viceroy of Egypt."

"By Jove, she shall edit my next romance!" muttered Sir Herbert, scarcely able to refrain from complimenting Lady Madrepore outright on her genius for amplification. "I no longer wonder," was his secret reflection on the redundancy of her ladyship's organs of

invention, "that naked Truth is forced to hide herself in a well, since Lying presents herself in such flowing robes!"—

"Have you any commissions for Northamptonshire, Sir Herbert?" inquired Emma, while Reresby was proceeding to cross-examine Lady Madrepore. "We are on the eve of returning to Deaswold."

And the frank and cheerful manner in which she addressed him, so satisfied him that the country girl was not altogether spoiled by the tinsel and varnish of London life, that he instantly took a seat by her side; and entered as freely into conversation as in those unlucky days at Deasmarsh, when their intimacy excited the anxieties of Matilda.

"And do you not apprehend," said he, "that Deaswold will appear somewhat weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable to eyes that have been feasting upon *pas de déesses*, and ears accustomed to be tickled by Jullien and Herr Koenig?"

"On the contrary," was Emma's honest reply. "Home has gained astonishingly in my estimation by my peep at London! Here, one must be one of the privileged few, to enjoy oneself; whereas, country pleasures are open to all. It is only by especial favour I am the guest of Lady Belvedere to-night. But two days hence, I shall be enjoying the glorious summer sunshine in the midst of the woods and fields, and thanks to no one!"—

"Pride, pride, pride!" ejaculated Sir Herbert, (not venturing to quote the apostrophe of Milton's Satan, containing a monosyllable not to be lightly named to "ears polite") "pride, the perdition of the country, as vanity of the town!"—

"No, indeed," replied Emma, blushing at finding the finger-post of detection pointed towards her besetting sin: "I have only learned, by privation, the value of the precious hours and pleasant liberty which, at

Deaswold, had become too habitual to be appreciated."

"I do not wonder that you have learned to see new charms in Northamptonshire," rejoined Sir Herbert, with a significant glance at Reresby. "You have been studying under an instructor deeply interested in your enlightenment."

"Deeply indeed!" retorted Emma, unable to control an arch smile at seeing even the shrewd Sir Herbert so completely what Lord Richard Lovell would have called "sold and sent home;" or to resist the desire of retaliating, by an allusion to his own flirtations of yore. "But, considering that I have seen *you* submitted to tuition scarcely less partial, your affection for Deaswold and its environs does not exhibit itself by *very* frequent visits."

A sharp pang for a moment impeded the utterance of Sir Herbert!—Had Emma been aware how deeply-seated were the feelings of

resentment which kept him away from Deasmarsh, she would have hazarded no mention of the subject. But, like others, she was deceived by the liveliness of Sir Herbert Glynne's manners into the belief that he was a *mere* man of the world.

"Considering how strong and how effectively the *sexe peu beau* musters in your part of the county," said he, as soon as he was able to command his voice and spirits sufficiently for jesting,—"I am surprised you should have found occasion to note my absence. Have you not my friend Settringham, whom I saw the other night in a stall at the Opera, as brown and withered as a Normandy pippin, listening to Castellan through his double glasses; and, in the self-complacency of his duncehood, declaring that Grisi grows younger and younger every year?—Have you not the man-in-buckram, his cousin Abdolonymus—(what's the old diplomat's name?) who used to write 'private and confidential'

on his cards of invitation?—I say nothing of my friend Reresby, or of the lively son and heir of the house of Melfont,—seeing that they are bespoken!"—

"Sacred be the secrets of your friend Reresby," rejoined Emma, glancing at the victim still writhing in the clutches of Lady Madrepore with an audacity which Sir Herbert indignantly attributed to the pernicious lessons of a London season. "But, as regards Mr. Melfont, I fear it will be some time before Lady Madrepore obtains possession of the tiles from Persepolis she has commissioned him to add to her museum, on his return from the East."

"Melfont—George Melfont—uprooted from his native clay, and become a wanderer like the rest of us?"—cried Sir Herbert, startled out of all self-possession. "I should as soon have expected to hear of the expatriation of the Duke of York's Column!"—

"*Homme propose, femme dispose!*" re-

plied Emma shrugging her shoulders. "One of the painters of the day is said to have scraped to pieces one of the pictures of the old masters, in hopes to discover the secret of their colouring."

"And whom has Melfont been scraping?—His lady-mother, I hope!—I never saw a façade in greater need of new pointing!"—

"I mean," said Emma, piqued at what she conceived to be his wilful misconception, "that, after asking himself in vain what could be the superior merit in Sir Herbert Glynne inducing Miss Mordaunt to prefer him to a peerage, Melfont Park, and a rent-roll that would reach from hence to Cadogan Place, he at length decided it to be the enlightenment produced by much travel.—So he has even saddled his camel like the rest of you."—

"This is the most extraordinary story!" said Herbert, in an altered voice. "But no!—I see how it is!—You are making just

such an example of my credulity as Cad Rowlandson of that of your chaperon !"—

"You would not say so, had you called with papa and I, ten days ago, in Queen Anne Street, and seen poor dear Lady Melfont supervising the preparations for the exile of her fatted calf: the remedies for ophthalmia, the antidotes to venomous bites, the air cushions and Macintoshed tubs which were gathering together against the departure of the Overland Mail!"—

"And you mean that he is actually gone?"

"Actually gone.—Lord Melfont returned from Southampton, two days since, after seeing him off."

"Strange," observed Sir Herbert, though more to himself than to his companion, "that Reresby should never have mentioned the subject to me!"—

"I suspect it is a sore one to the whole family," rejoined Emma, taking the remark to herself. "Anxious as they were that Miss

Mordaunt should relent in Mr. Melfont's favour, because convinced that the marriage would assure her happiness, it must have been provoking enough to see her again and again refuse an alliance which would have settled her in their immediate neighbourhood at once and for ever."—

"There certainly were strong reasons for Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt's forwarding the match," said Sir Herbert, becoming suddenly candid and liberal, on ascertaining that parental persuasion had effected nothing towards the establishment of George Melfont's pretensions. "It was but natural they should prefer having her within their reach in Northamptonshire, to running the risk of a residence in Ireland!"—

"A residence in Ireland?—What a horrible alternative!" cried Emma, far from suspecting the drift of his logic. "But who ever talked of her going to Ireland?—Who ever *thought* of her going to Ireland?"—

Sir Herbert accused himself, of course, of being unpardonably absent; and expressed a sort of blundering belief that Lord Melfont possessed estates in the sister island:—" and as fathers are apt to settle on their sons when they marry," continued he, "the house they find damp or the estates they consider least eligible, I was stupid enough to fancy that the noble couple capable of residing in Queen Anne Street might condemn their heir apparent to Tipperary."

Luckily for the credit of his veracity, the colloquy between Lady Madrepore and Reresby was interrupted by Lady Mary Grovynor Grovynor's fidgeting up to the Honourable Member for Castle Dangan, to inquire the name and address of a detector-lock manufacturer, whose handiworks she had admired at Deasmarsh, and was eager to recommend to the notice of Ibrahim Pacha; seeing that, by dint of half an hour's severe study, removing the key fifty times, and manœuvring

it in a hundred different ways, a certainty was obtained that any human being unpossessed of similar patience and memory, and ingenuity enough to go through all the details of the process, would be debarred from reading the letters or making off with the valuables which all this locking and counter-locking and relocking purported to render safe as the Crown jewels in the Tower.

For, while her ladyship was informing herself with much questioning of what a glance at the "London Directory" would have certified in a moment, Lady Madrepore, devoid of all interest in such works of nature or art as were uncalculated to figure within the glass case of a museum, fastened herself once more on her *protégée;* and Sir Herbert, as thoroughly transformed in nature since he entered the room as a crysalis transmuted into a butterfly, could scarcely restrain his spirits within decent bounds, while enjoying his favourite sport of applying the magnifying glass to her absurdities.

He rendered her the happiest of women by presenting to her as the Mahomedanized Jesuit the unfortunate Don Manoëlo, who became the most puzzled of men by her mysterious allusions to his secret vocation, and her hints that in the rotund form of Lady Mary Grovynor Grovynor he beheld one of the overgrown beauties of Ibrahim;—and had not Emma, the business of whose evening was now despatched, expressed a wish to escape from the heated throng, where "man delighted her not nor woman either," the news of George Melfont's intended introduction to the Plagues of Egypt (more intoxicating to Sir Herbert Glynne than a whole case of Champagne!) might have betrayed him into extravagance beyond the toleration of his noble cousin and her guests.

CHAPTER XXII.

No might nor greatness in mortality
Can censure 'scape; back-wounding calumny
The whitest virtue strikes. What thing so strong
Can tie the gall up of a sland'rous tongue!

SHAKSPEARE.

"How beautiful, how refreshing!" exclaimed Emma to her father, as they were borne homeward the following day, by the wings of steam, through woods and valleys that seemed to revive them as by a bath of verdure, after the stony desert of the great metropolis.—

"Refreshing indeed!"—echoed the Rector. "I account it first among the blessings of Providence to be fated to lead a country life,—a destiny that renders it both easier to live, and easier to die."—

There was some pretext for their expansion of feeling. To escape the fuss, and fidget, and much ado about nothing of Lady Barton's establishment, was a relief in itself; and the country, in its brightest effulgence of mid-summer glories, appeared to their eager eyes as if tricked out for a fête.—The gardens and fields were so full of flowers,—the plains so loaded with produce,—the air so fragrant, —the waters so limpid,—that Nature seemed to be holding her court, and outshining in her raiment, wrought about with divers colours, the embroidered mantle of kings.

"Even misery does not look so wretched in the country," added Emma, as they traversed a cheerful hamlet embedded in elder-bushes, "as under the clouds of smoke that choke the lungs of the Londoners, in their gloomy courts and stifling workrooms."—

And when at length they reached the station of Darley Level, and discerned the beautiful woods of Deasmarsh dotting the

hills, both father and daughter exclaimed once more in the fullness of their hearts—"how beautiful,—how refreshing!"—

The green vistas of Mr. Mordaunt's park,—the distant glitter of the Deas,—the cheerful aspect of the well-detached stone mansion-house,—and, above all, the air of comfort and prosperity diffused over the place and its inhabitants,—appeared to strike Emma as for the first time, on winding along the road leading from the Station to the Rectory.

"Don't you think, papa," said she, as though her mind were giving a loose to pleasant anticipations,—"don't you think that a woman must be indeed hard to please if, able to live and die at Deasmarsh, she sighed after London pleasures?"—

And the tone of exultation in which she spoke, while looking forward to the happiness of her cousin Magdalen, which in the romantic fervour of her disposition she fancied about to be secured by her interposition,

induced a hope on the part of her father that, now they were about to be alone together again in the country, she would lose no time in opening her heart. But so completely did she appear to be giving way to her feelings, that he determined, should she again relapse into reserve, to surmount his reluctance; and afford her those paternal warnings and monitions of which she stood so much in need. He dreaded the thoughts of standing face to face with Mordaunt, so long as, by shrinking from a full explanation with Emma, he had not placed himself aloof from the confederacy of the young people.—

The welcome to the country afforded him by his wealthy neighbour, served to double his compunctious visitings. The hearty salutations of Mordaunt, or rather the salutations which, instead of being hearty, as formerly, were almost affectionate, touched to the quick the heart of the Rector. — For *he* did not perceive that an inflexion of pity

modulated the voice of his friendly neighbour.

Before the proprietor of Deasmarsh had been twenty minutes in the Rectory parlour, however, his manner completely altered.—Not because his friend Jacob appeared so ill at ease as to call for some exertion of cheerfulness to relieve his embarrassment. Not because Jacob's daughter made her appearance, bright and smiling as when he first beheld her in that very room, looking like a new-blown flower in a spring morning. But because the political questions, which he expressly avoided canvassing from a desire to eschew strife with a neighbour so respected, were frankly approached by the Rector. Satisfied of the conscientious motive of his conversion to more liberal principles than those which, like parasites, clung to the family-tree of the Cromers which they rendered barren by their prurient growth, he had no fear that his honesty would be mistrusted by an honest man.—

But though Jacob candidly avowed his change of opinion to have been produced by an examination of the position and necessities of the country unwarped by the personal and professional bias of which it was less easy to divest himself at home, attributing the enlargement of his views to the arguments of a variety of first-rate men, independent in mind and condition, with whom he had latterly come in contact, — Mr. Mordaunt felt as convinced as though the fact had passed under his eyes, that it was by Reresby alone the conversion of his worthy neighbour had been effected; that, though Leaguers and Chartists had spouted and pamphletized in vain, and a potato panic conspired with the Houynhim eloquence of the handicap Chatham to disgust him with the tenets and advocates of monopoly, it had needed but a touch of the skilful scalpel of Reresby to relieve him from his strabismus.

In the joy of his paternal triumph, there-

fore, Mordaunt forgot the compassionate impulses which had suggested his early visit to the Rectory.—A flush of joy rose to his face. His eye brightened. His heart became as light as a feather,—(as light as Emma's,—who could scarcely contain her spirits at finding herself once more her own mistress in her own home, the trusted delegate from one so highly regarded to another so much beloved!) In the elation of his soul, he could talk of nothing but London,—the young member for Castle Dangan,—the golden opinions he had won,—and the bright career awaiting him;—till poor Jacob was fain to walk to the open window, and conceal, by staring out upon his new-mown lawn, his embarrassing sense of the sad disappointment awaiting this ambitious father.

"And what day will you fix to come and dine at Deasmarsh, my dear young lady?" said the happy man, how little suspecting the origin of Jacob's chagrin!—"The sooner the

better! Our neighbours are most of them still in town; so that we have nothing to offer you, just now, likely to satisfy a London belle. But my wife and daughter will rejoice to see you again; and I have a world of parish business to talk over with your father."—

An invitation so friendly could be accepted only in the same cordial spirit; and, with a heavy heart, did the Rector find himself crossing once more the threshold and sharing the bread and salt of the man towards whom he fancied himself playing the part of Judas.

All the pleasure of traversing that beautiful domain, which he regarded with the partial eye of one who, having watched the unpromising child of a friend expand into beauty or manliness, sympathizes in his parental pride,—all the satisfaction of gazing upon so exquisite a combination of woods and waters, and flowers such as paradise may have rejoiced in,—was lost in the guilty feeling

that he was tacitly included in a conspiracy against his friend!—

It struck him, indeed, (though the suspicion might perhaps arise from the morbid state of his own feelings) that the countenance and manner of Mordaunt were already a little changed towards him since the preceding day. His welcome, if not less kind, was *different* from what he expected. There was an air of concern and embarrassment on the part of his host, for which he found it hard to account. To Emma, more particularly, the formality of his greeting was unmistakeable.

Not that *she* appeared conscious of any want of cordiality. The coldness of Mrs. Mordaunt and Matilda appeared of small consequence to one who had now discovered that the steeple of her village was not a landmark for the earth: that there were places and people, among whom Deasmarsh and the Mordaunts were of as small account as the com-

munity of an ant-hill, and in whose regard Deaswold Rectory enjoyed higher consideration.—The inconsistency with which their favour towards her had varied as with the mutability of a weather-glass, had diminished, moreover, their value in her eyes. For capricious people never inspire respect;—and so little in common with those of her father were her feelings in revisiting the once-loved spot, that she exulted in her advantage over them as the depositary of Reresby's secret.

The brilliancy of her smiles and newly-acquired *à plomb* of her manner, were of course attributed by Matilda and her mother to the self-conceit engendered by her London triumphs. Her incidental allusions to her recent pleasures seemed intended to apprize them that the daughter of their parish priest had been welcomed into circles, from which the family of Mordaunt, the cotton-spinner, would have been excluded; and though she

spoke of "my aunt, Lady Barton," only when it was indispensable, the name recurred in her anecdotes often enough to give offence.

When, in reply to Mrs. Mordaunt's measured and embarrassed inquiry whether Miss Cromer had lately seen her son, Emma answered with audacious glibness, "Oh, yes!—he put me into the carriage only three nights ago, after a very pleasant party at Lady Belvedere's in Belgrave Square," the indignation of both mother and daughter was completed by the coolness with which she added, "You probably know Lady Belvedere by name,—as she is the cousin of your friend Sir Herbert Glynne?"—

"The name of Lady Belvedere is very generally known," was the ceremonious rejoinder of Mrs. Mordaunt; who appeared so little to encourage the conversation, that Emma turned towards the daughter to add, "Sir Herbert was, of course, at the party in Belgrave Square; and, finding I was about to return

home, charged me with a thousand compliments to Deasmarsh."

The vivid colour which, at this allusion, overspread the fine face of Matilda Mordaunt, proved that, in *her* estimation, it added insult to injury. A juster appreciation of Emma's frank and earnest character might have satisfied her that, had her suspicions of Sir Herbert's defection been just, his name would never have escaped the lips of her rival. But, in her present perverse mood, convinced by Emma's insolent liveliness that the purpose of her sojourn in town was accomplished, that her wedding clothes were in progress, and that nothing but a special license was wanting to convert her into Lady Glynne, of Glynne Manor,—she could scarcely summon courage for even the monosyllables occasionally necessary in reply to her sallies.

Far other, however, far, *far* more serious, was the origin of the abstraction of mind that rendered Mr. Mordaunt's exposition to the

Rector of justice and vestry business transacted since his departure, so different from his usual lucidity!—The customary clearness of his mind and consistency of his reasoning, seemed blurred into unaccountable confusion; and his poor conscience-stricken guest, after vainly endeavouring to comprehend what was incomprehensible, sat watching in secret consternation for some sudden explosion of the smothered feelings that were thus distracting his soul. No unusual demonstration, however, occurred: and the affectionate manner in which the hand of the Rector was wrung at parting by his host, served to prove that, whatever might be Mordaunt's suspicions concerning the attachment of his son, the father of its object had no share in his displeasure.

The usually firm and serene mind of Mordaunt was, in fact, so disturbed, that, at present, he had scarcely determined on whom his displeasure ought to fall.

An interview had been asked of him that

morning by young Milnward, preparatory to his departure from Deaswold; which, concluding it to be a farewell visit of acknowledgment for hospitalities received during the preceding six weeks, was granted without a thought. But from the distressed countenance and embarrassed air with which his visitor entered the room, Mordaunt saw at once that some matter of deeper moment must be in agitation. He was, in fact, compelled to exhort him, more than once, to explain the motives of his visit, ere the young man, so calm and clear in the pulpit, could overcome the emotions under which he laboured.

"It would be difficult for me to express, sir," he began, "the mental struggle against which I have been contending for some days past, as to the propriety of waiting upon you before I quit this place, to relieve my mind from a grievous burthen under which it is labouring; or whether, at all risks, to address

myself to Mr. Cromer. But though I conceive the parental tenderness of both to be equally deep seated, I conceive that the father of Mr. Reresby Mordaunt should be of the two the better qualified to support—"

"For mercy's sake, my dear sir," cried Mordaunt, drawing his chair close to his visitor the moment he found that the matter in agitation regarded his son, "no apologies, no circumlocution!—What is the matter!—Speak out!—I can bear anything better than suspense!"

"You can scarcely have failed to perceive, sir," resumed Milnward, a little more articularly, though still with hesitation, "that, for some time past, a less respectful feeling than could be desired towards our excellent friend, Mr. Cromer, has prevailed at Deanswold?"

"Towards the Rector?—I can't say I have noticed anything of the kind!" cried Mordaunt, becoming less excited as soon as

the interest of the case seemed to shift itself to other shoulders than those of Reresby.

"Not when, three weeks ago, the church was nearly deserted on occasion of his doing duty?" inquired Milnward, gathering self-possession when he found his face and words less anxiously watched by the person he was addressing.

"I vaguely remember that the congregation was a thin one," replied his host. "But *that* might arise from caprice. The parishioners, perhaps, prefer a younger preacher."

"No, sir. Many of those who absented themselves were ashamed to look their pastor in the face, after the bitterness with which they had been canvassing his conduct, while others were desirous of marking, in the only way in their power, their personal disapproval of it."—

"Why, what has my friend Jacob been doing?" inquired Mordaunt, beginning to hope that the mental consternation of his

young visitor would bring forth only, like the mountain in labour, a *ridiculus mus*.—"Were I required to point out a human being in this world free from speck or blemish, it would be the worthy Rector of Deanwold."—

"And you would do justly!" cried young Milnward with warmth. "For there does not breathe a better Christian, a better man."

"In which conviction," resumed Mordaunt, "I confess I see nothing very afflicting in the defection of a few grumbling old blockheads; who, if St. Paul himself were to come and preach the gospel among them, would be trying to pick holes in his doctrines."

"It is not the *doctrines*, sir, of Mr. Cromer, with which the parish pretends to find fault," resumed Milnward.

"With what else, then,—since his conduct is irreproachable?"

"*That*, sir, is the point in dispute. If blameless himself, he is accused of screening

the misdeeds of others:—and it is the serious apprehension I entertain that this charge may be brought home to him in some most painful and offensive manner, that determined me to confer with you upon the subject."—

"At least, let me clearly understand what we are talking about," resumed the proprietor of Deasmarsh.—"In the first place, *whose* evil doings is poor Cromer supposed to have countenanced?"

"Before I venture to reply, sir," rejoined Milnward, respectfully, "permit me to assure you that my own opinion on the question is wholly neutral.—The unfortunate circumstances which have given rise to so factious a spirit on the part of Mr. Cromer's parishioners, occurred before I entered upon my duties.—From *him* I know nothing whatever on the subject: and from the high terms of panegyric in which, since his return to his duties, I have heard him speak of Mr. Reresby Mordaunt,—"

"My son?" interrupted Mordaunt, again resuming his original interest in the debate.

"— convince me," continued Milnward, "that the reports which have given rise in the village to the blackest of inferences, are altogether false and calumnious."

"Reports involving my son Reresby?"

"And the daughter of my friend Mr. Cromer."

"Tu, tu, tu, tu!"—cried Mordaunt, inexpressibly relieved. "Is *that*, my dear sir, the wonderful dilemma which has been lengthening your face for the last quarter of an hour, and frightened me half out of my wits?—Set your mind at ease!—A misconception—a blunder—an old wife's transposition of persons! There is nothing more, I promise you, between Miss Emma and my son, than between old Excellency Settringham, as they call him at Basinghill, and one of the prim Miss Moulseys!"

"I am heartily rejoiced to hear it, sir.

There only remains for us to devise the surest means of checking the circulation of the slander before it extend from the village to the country, and perhaps attain in the end the fatal publicity of the newspaper press."

"Why, after all," rejoined his companion, unable to repress a smile at the monstering of nothings, in which the ignorance of the world of poor young Milnward seemed prone to indulge, "the worst they could say would be neither very injurious nor very hard of disproval. Were the papers to go the lengths of announcing a marriage between the parties, nothing easier than to make them contradict it!"—

"But neither the report nor the contradiction, I fear, would go far to re-establish Mr. Cromer in the esteem of his parishioners," said Milnward, gravely shaking his head.

"Why, do you mean to say," cried Mordaunt, not a little diverted at what he conceived to be the pragmaticality of the

young curate, "that the Deaswold folks have deserted the church it is their duty to attend, merely because the Rector's daughter has been seen laughing and chatting occasionally with a fine young man, whose acquaintance would do honour to any girl in the kingdom?"

A sudden flush rose to the cheek of the reverend moralist, who remained coldly silent.

"Or that the farmers' wives are such confounded prudes," added Mordaunt, a little nettled, "as to fancy that a parson's daughter is not to open her eyes, ears, and lips, like other young women of her age?"—

"I am not a man of the world, Mr. Mordaunt," replied Milnward, almost sternly. "But, even if ungoverned on such subjects by professional reserve, I should be of opinion that the unfortunate business we are discussing is such as ought not to be treated with levity. If, instead of meditating *contradiction* of the reports that your son is disposed to

repair by marriage the offence offered to the honour of an old and respectable family, you were disposed to sanction his union with—"

"With Jacob Cromer's daughter?" impatiently interrupted Mordaunt. "I tell you, my dear sir, again and again, that, from first to last, you are under a mistake. There never was a question of love or marriage between these young people. On a first acquaintance, indeed, my son might be a little taken by Emma's pretty face and artless character. But there is nothing in such a girl to fix the affections of a young man of high pretensions and superior faculties, like my son."

"The more to be lamented that his conduct should have given rise to impressions so different," said Milnward, disapprovingly; "and if, in justice to Emma Cromer, he were to lower the pretensions you speak of—"

"In one, sir," cried Mordaunt, with angry abruptness—"the hand and heart of my son are otherwise disposed of."

"God's will be done!" was the pious rejoinder of his visitor. "I was in hopes that public atonement on *his* part might at least tend to the exoneration of my unfortunate friend."

"Without feeling myself called upon to enter more fully into my family affairs, sir," resumed Mordaunt, out of patience, "permit me to observe that I see no possible call for exoneration on the part of my son!"

"Not after inveigling the unhappy girl (*child* I might almost call her, at the period her indiscretions began!) into clandestine meetings, out of reach of her father's protecting arm,—out of reach of the decencies of home,—in a lonely building, with only his own evil intentions to keep watch over her unguarded youth—"

"False—utterly false! You presume, sir, upon your sacred functions to come and insult me with an infernal falsehood!" cried Mordaunt, every pulse within him throbbing with

dignation. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Milnard!" added he, in an humbled voice, on perving his young visitor rise hastily from his air, to quit the room, "but you are really ring me too far. Flesh and blood may not dure so foul a charge against one of the st hearted and most gentlemanly young lows in the world!"

Willingly accepting the apology of one ose blindness of paternal pride and tenness was proverbial among his friends, the ing clergyman patiently resumed his seat.

'It was because prepared for some such burst of indignation, sir," said he, "that esitated to enter your doors for the pure of addressing you on a subject so painful so delicate. But you insisted on being ghtened!"

'But I am *not* enlightened. All you say ls only further to bewilder me!" cried daunt. "I again earnestly entreat you, Milnward, to speak out! What is it you

mean? What has induced you to bring forward this extraordinary charge against my son?"

"The indignation, sir, of the whole village of Deaswold. But that indignation has a deeper origin. I am grieved to say, sir, that the angry feelings existing against both young Mr. Mordaunt and the Rectory, are mainly attributable to the evil instigations of Cromer Hall—"

"I could have sworn it!" interrupted Mordaunt, breathing more freely.

"In justice, however, to Mr. Cromer, I ought to state," added Milnward, "that the moment it was brought to his knowledge, by the testimony of an eyewitness, that his niece and your son held daily clandestine meetings at Deasmill, he proceeded straight to his brother, and warned him of the fact—"

"The deuce he did!"—

"But, blinded by simple-minded good faith, and implicit confidence in his child, the Rector expressed total disbelief, in terms that

ve produced an irreconcilable rupture be-
een the two brothers."

"I was afraid," murmured Mordaunt, as
ıugh speaking to himself, "that Deasmarsh
ıt for something in the animosity at pre-
t existing between them!"—

'The Squire, it appears," continued his
tor, "has not scrupled to assert that his
ther was cognizant, from the first, of all
t has been going on between his daughter
your son; but that, in the hope of patch-
up a match between them,—in the hope
naking a marriage indispensable on any
ıs,—he was content to close his eyes to
affair."

Infamous, infamous!—and as groundless
: is base!"

So I am fully convinced—so I never hesi-
l to believe. The opinion, nevertheless,
gained ground. The Rector's obstinate
rence to *your* cause in opposition to his
her, whenever parish dissensions have

arisen, has given colour, sir, to the impression of his subservience to the richest man in the district."

"I wish those who say so could witness the mulish obstinacy of my friend Jacob whenever (and the occasions are neither few nor far between) we differ on political questions!—I sometimes accuse him of being (next to myself) the most pig-headed fellow in the county!"—

"The intimacy apparent between you induces other notions in the village. Thanks to his brother's insinuations, his parishioners are convinced that he is prepared to go all lengths in the sacrifice of his principles and respectability, to secure your favour. Farmer Richards, for a long time one of the warmest of his partisans, on finding him return the other day from London an advocate of free trade,—a convert to the well-known doctrines of Mr. Reresby Mordaunt — exclaimed publicly in the vestry, that, if so weak on *one*

nt, he could believe all that had been re-
ted;—that the man who could sacrifice his
ntry to propitiate a wealthy neighbour,
ld even sacrifice his daughter!"—

All this, I fear, is more serious than I at
supposed it," said Mordaunt, shaking
head. "Calumny is a fiendish imp, that
ts up into a giant while one's eyes are
:ing.—To gratify the unbrotherly ma-
of one of the meanest of men, I am afraid
briars have been planted in the path of
)oor friend Jacob than it will be alto-
:r easy to root up."

I trust," rejoined Milnward, "he will
philosophy enough,—or *better* than
sophy,—to meet with patience whatever
:ion may be inflicted on him by the
spirit of the Deaswold people.—But,
:h possessed of sufficient confidence in
aughter and respect for Mr. Reresby
aunt to regard with contempt the
insinuations which have endeavoured

to connect the testimony of Drewe the labourer with the melancholy event at Deasmill—"

"*What* event at Deasmill?"—interrupted Mordaunt.

"The discovery of the dead infant in the Deas, adjoining the mill-works. I greatly fear, I say, that the mere fact of such a circumstance having been for a single moment supposed to inculpate the daughter to whom he is so fondly attached, may exercise a grievous influence over his health."—

"By Heaven and earth, this is too bad!" cried Mordaunt, starting up, and with agitated footsteps pacing the room. "Have you really the courage to tell me in cool blood that you believe, or that any human being asserts, or has ever ventured to assert, the criminality of that poor innocent child at the Rectory,—or to connect such an act as child-murder with the honourable name of my son?"—

"If I fancied there existed the smallest

unds for such a charge, Mr. Mordaunt," vely expostulated the young clergyman, ıould I, think you, have hazarded the ısure of this audience? No, sir!—I do believe it!—I am convinced that the *le* story is a foul and groundless calumny. it is believed by *many*. The story was ınated into my ear before I had been y days in Deaswold: and, at first, I ed it as a contemptible slander, likely to eedily disproved by the discovery of the lelinquents. Unluckily, this was not the and on visiting Deasmill, for the pur- of sifting the matter, I found from the ons that they had been subject to the ruel accusations in consequence, accord- *their* account, of evil reports emanating Cromer Hall. Wherever I went, mean- the scandal was beforehand with me. hole village was in commotion; and, on rival of the Rector to do a day's duty, weeks ago, I was afraid he could not

but notice the altered deportment of his parishioners."—

"I *did* think him out of spirits when he came to Deasmarsh," observed Mordaunt frankly; "but little suspected the cause!"—

"He had probably received some personal slight," rejoined Milnward:—"but certain am I that so outspoken a nature as his would have been unable to restrain its indignation a moment, had he suspected its origin."—

"I verily believe you!" rejoined Mordaunt, with a gesture indicative of his own irritation.—"Though my gray hairs ought to keep cool my blood, and though, in my youth, of no very irascible temperament, I promise you it requires some effort on my part not to make the best of my way, this very moment, to Cromer Hall, and call to account the sneaking scoundrel who has maligned his own flesh and blood as well as vilified my son!"—

"I fear, sir, the report has by this time

ranspired too widely for even *him* to repair
ıe mischief he has done!"—said Milnward,
sing to take leave.

"And what then do you suggest by way of
ıtidote to the evil?" cried Mr. Mordaunt,
ith some hauteur.—"You can scarcely have
ken so strong a step as to alarm a father's
art on such a subject, Mr. Milnward, without
ving remedial measures to propose?"—

"*My* interest in the subject," rejoined his
itor, "is of course limited to anxiety for
› peace and welfare of my friends at the
ctory; whom I conceive to be victims to
› envious, jealous spirit of their kinsman
Cromer Hall.—But, were the case my own,
. Mordaunt,—that is, were I situated as you
,—I would not stir a step in it previous to
sulting with my son.—He *ought* to be
rized of what is going on. He ought to
ıcquainted with the injurious conduct of
n Cromer."

True enough!" interrupted Mordaunt in

a lower voice. "For a thousand reasons, he should be warned of *that!*"—

"And when he has informed you, in return, what portion of Drewe's testimony is founded on fact, so as to afford you exact data on which to defend his cause, no time should be lost in bringing the matter to the strictest scrutiny and disproof."—

"I will be off to town to-morrow by the early train," cried Mordaunt, at once adopting the idea.

"And why not, my dear sir, to-night? Why not start for London by the train that is about to take me into Hertfordshire?"—

"Because, most unluckily, the Rector and his daughter are engaged to dine with me to-day; and should poor Jacob have become alive, in the interim, to the ill will of which he is the object, he might attribute my sudden absence to ungraciousness."

"You are right—quite right, sir," said the departing guest, preparing to quit the room.

'*His* feelings ought to be our first object.—
nd now that my most painful duty is accom-
lished, suffer me to take leave by thanking
)u for your kindness during my stay in this
ırt of the country;—a kindness that would
: not a little increased could I obtain a pro-
ise that, should anything further transpire
ncerning this painful affair, you will kindly
; my anxieties at rest."

The promise being readily given, Milnward,
:h a heavy heart, bade adieu to the spot where
ministry had prospered so much less fully
n he could have wished;—leaving Mordaunt
'ulfil the duty that hung heavy on his shoul-
ɜ, of playing the courteous host to Emma
her father.—To accost poor Jacob, indeed,
ıgh a sad, was not a difficult task,—so
·oughly did his worthy neighbour sympa-
ɐ *in* his situation.—But at present, he felt
ıt his ease with Jacob's daughter.—His
l was not fully made up.—

hough incapable of a bad or dishonourable

action, Reresby was not proof against the weaknesses of his age.—The example of foreign countries might, moreover, have relaxed the principles of morality imbibed amid the rigid decencies of his early home; and his father did not feel *quite* secure that his handsome son might not have dealt more lightly with this bright-eyed and unguarded girl than became either their relative position or his engagements with her cousin.

On the morrow, he should satisfy himself by a single inquiry of his son. One word of Reresby's would resolve him.—Meanwhile, the unsuspecting girl who dined at Deasmarsh, and talked so glibly of London and its pleasures, was a grievous stumbling-block in the way of the distressed father.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I never tempted her with word too large,
But as a brother to a sister show'd
Bashful sincerity and comely love.

SHAKSPEARE.

'My dear father!" cried Reresby, starting from his breakfast-table next morning to come one who, wise enough to eschew at . ; pleasant season of the year the stony s of the great metropolis, was indeed an ;pected guest. — "What in the world ;s you to town?—Nothing is amiss, I ;, at home?"—

Nothing,—nothing!"—cried the bustling ;ry gentleman, who seemed to introduce he London bachelor's paradise a whole- whiff from the far off fields and forests, rhose premeditated reserve, till satisfied

of the irreproachability of his son, gave way the very moment he looked upon his face.—"I am in town on business, my dear boy, about which we will talk when you have given me a cup of tea and a slice of tongue. —I was afraid, as I came along, that your breakfast hour might be over.—I was afraid you would be out."

"My breakfast hour *is* over, though, luckily, not my breakfast!"—cried Reresby, glancing at the clock on his chimney-piece, after again heartily shaking his hand with his visitor.—"But we did not divide this morning till half-past four.—A glorious majority!—Ninety-four, instead of the eighty-three on which we reckoned!"

And in a moment, in spite of himself, Mordaunt was deep in details of the debate.—"*Who* had spoken,—*who* answered,—*who* distinguished himself?"—The instincts of the public man were aroused. He forgot that there was a Deaswold rectory in the world!—

For full half an hour, they talked of no-
ing but politics. — At the *end* of half an
ur, Mordaunt saw in the young man before
n only the zealous servant of the country,
only the illustrator of his name, — only the
ı who was to work his way to Canning-
p.—To tax him with a crime,—to tax him
n with an act of folly,—would have been
rilege. — Ere, however, the prospects of
kingdom were half discussed by two
ent patriots, who talked, not for victory
mutual enlightenment, Reresby's servant
ught in a note which was opened with
legree of nonchalance proclaiming it,
ıgh addressed in a female hand, to be of
ature to fear nothing from his father's
ence.

Lady Barton's servant waits for an an-
, sir," said the valet; and after a hasty
sal, Reresby returned a verbal reply—

My compliments to Lady Barton, and I
endeavour to send her, in the course of

the day, the order she requires.—One of those tiresome women," added he, turning, as the servant left the room, to his father, (who, the moment the name of the widow of the late celebrated was mentioned, lapsed into severity and sternness of countenance,)—"one of those tiresome women who are always pestering one for admissions to the lady's gallery at the House of Commons; which, containing only accommodation for a dozen persons, is sure to be bespoken."—

Mr. Mordaunt finished his tea in silence.

"And all for the affectation of pretending to listen to a debate which interests them about as much as the muster roll of a regiment!"—resumed the young member;—"inasmuch as their cackling is said to render the adjoining gallery insupportable to people who go there to listen instead of talk!—However, I must procure Lady Barton what she asks for!" added he, in a more cheerful tone. "I have nothing to refuse to the sister-in-law of

acob Cromer, — the aunt of dear little mma!"—

This was indeed speaking out! — Mr. Morunt's heart steeled itself at once!—

" While they were in town, then," said he, 'ou renewed the intimacy which appeared have a little fallen off at Deasmarsh?"

' Naturally! — In London, Emma Cromer my '*payse!*'—In London, Emma served to g all Northamptonshire before my eyes!"

And among the other spots of Northtonshire which she serves to recall," deded his father, almost rivalling the frown lympian Jove in the stern knitting of brows, — " pray do you include *Deas*-"—

Indeed I do, my dear father!" — cried by,—concluding from the significance of ther's manner that poor Magdalen must his mind. "Officious persons, I see, old you all! — But they have only antid my purpose. I pledged myself to

Emma before she quitted London, that I would make a clean breast of it; and that you should have the means of judging the peculiar delicacy of our situation."—

"And after *that*," cried Mordaunt, thinking aloud, "she had the audacity to come with a smiling face and dine with his mother and sister!"—

"And why not, my dear father?"—cried Reresby, a little hurt.—"No blame can be imputed to *her!*—*Her* conduct, God knows, has been every thing that is frank and generous!"—

"Frank and generous!" again ejaculated the elder Mordaunt, shrugging his shoulders. "Ay, the frankness and generosity which a magistrates' bench rewards with hard labour or a solitary cell!"—

"I never before heard you illiberal, father!" cried the thunderstruck Reresby. "I hardly know you this morning!"—

"And *I* hardly know my son!"—retorted

Iordaunt, deeply affected.— "That
ash, — that you were indiscreet,—
ere warmer-blooded than prudence
eresby, I was fully aware. — But I
e perilled my soul that you would
feit your own, than bring down in
the grave the gray hairs of a good
Iacob Cromer, or break the heart of
l as his niece!"

father pleading the cause of Mag-
exclaimed Reresby, in mingled joy
rise.

matter of personal feeling," gravely
his father,—"I was certainly desirous
should attach yourself otherwise than
ughter of the man of all England I
spise and detest. But, having done
inveigled her innocent affections, so
am told by those who know her, she
er lifted up her head since you left
ntry, and is in some danger of following
ers to an untimely grave—"

"My poor dear Magdalen!"—cried Reresby, clasping his hands.

"Having, I say," continued old Mordaunt, "wrought all this mischief to the poor young creature, trust me, Reresby, that, among the many by whom your cruel duplicity will be condemned, first and foremost will be your father!"—

"My cruel *duplicity* towards her!"—cried his son. "When I have acted only in reluctant obedience to your commands!"—

"How, sir! you presume to ascribe to *me* your infamous levity of conduct?"—

Concluding that his father must allude to his attentions to Lady Belvedere, (which had probably transpired at Deasmarsh through the giddy prattling of Emma) Reresby looked foolish, and was silent.—But Mr. Mordaunt fixed his eyes so steadily upon him while waiting a reply, that he at length managed to stammer forth—"I assure you, sir, it was a mere flirtation!—my intentions were never

ıt *my* age, surely there is no great
passetemps of that description?"
emps, indeed!" — reiterated his in-
her — swelling with scorn. — "Al-
ıch epithet when vice or folly is to
ɔd! — But let me tell you that, if
e to show your face at Deasmarsh,
ay chance to find that Northamp-
umpkins entertain stout English
such points! Already, thanks to
setemps,' they have insulted their
all but desecrated the House of
ıy, thanks to your '*passetemps*,' the
f is exposed to the scoffs and scorns
ıle village of Deaswold!"—
alen?"—exclaimed the young man,
astonished at the *ricochet*.—
alen?—No!—the graceless baggage
you have abandoned her!"—
ough "graceless baggage" was an
ıich, however severe, might be ap-
ıout much injustice to the Coun-

tess of Belvedere, — the word "girl" was a puzzler!—

"I am beginning to suspect, my dear father," cried Reresby, "that we do not quite understand each other! — Tell me distinctly, what it is you disapprove in my conduct; or whether I have the smallest hope that you will relent in my favour, so as to advance the epoch of my marriage with Magdalen Cromer?" —

Thus clearly apostrophized, Mr. Mordaunt's explanations became equally lucid. — All he had heard from Milnward was speedily related; and to his joy, the indignation of Reresby, as he listened, more than kept pace with his own.

"Poor Emma! — poor kind-hearted little Emma!" cried he. "Hard, indeed, that *she* should be the victim of my folly; — she, who might have vindicated herself by a single word! — For, when talking over with her in London my engagement to her cousin, she

frankly owned that, thanks to the restlessness of girlish curiosity — (she called it curiosity, but I suspect that a *little* spice of woman's jealousy mingled in the leaven) she had discovered, very soon after they commenced, my clandestine meetings with Magdalen; and that, on one occasion, enraged at our want of confidence in her, she was on the point of entering Clemson's cottage to confound us!"

"She appears to be a generous, warm-hearted girl," — said the elder Mordaunt, — using the very epithet he had resented when applied by his son. — "The more reason that we should lose no time in extricating her from the abominable aspersions her uncle has been the means of drawing upon her head."

"But what is to be *done?*" — inquired the young member. — "Her father, thank goodness, — that is, thank *his* goodness, — is too excellent to have so much as listened to the imputations devised by the Squire. As regards *him* she needs no vindication. — And as to

those confounded fellows at Deaswold, (who, I suppose, have scarcely yet recovered the shock of their corn-law defeat) *our* assuring them that Miss Emma Cromer is as pure as unsunned snow, — that she never set foot in Deasmill in her life, except to carry essence of mustard to old Clemson for the cure of his rheumatism,—and that, as to the little victim found in the Deas, it was doubtless the offspring of one of their own disreputable daughters,—would have only the effect of establishing their contrary belief! — What *fact* have we to adduce in answer to the calumnies of the Squire?—It would hardly do to have the Honourable Member for Castle Dangan making an affidavit before poor Jacob, or Sir William Settringham, that he is not so great a blackguard as represented!—For though I have suspicions, *and strong ones*, respecting the child and its murderers, I have no positive evidence to bring forward."

"*Suspicions?*" — cried Mordaunt, the

instinct of the magistrate suddenly flaring up.

" *That* point, my dear father, we will discuss hereafter. What I would first determine, is the surest and speediest mode of vindicating the character of Emma Cromer?"—

" You seem to find it easier, my sapient son, to unravel the mighty maze of political economy, than see an inch beyond your nose!" cried his father, endeavouring to rally his spirits.—" There is clearly but one mode of accomplishing this desirable object, which is—"

Reresby stood suddenly still to listen.—

" By proceeding straight to Cromer Hall, and demanding of its caitiff of an owner—the hand of his daughter!"—

At that moment, Mr. Mordaunt's looks were better to be understood than his words! Reresby saw that he was in earnest; for his eyes were glistening with emotion.—

" And you would make such a sacrifice of

your prejudices, my dearest father?—you actually authorize such a measure?"—

"Actually!—To-morrow, if you choose!—I owe it to the son I am so justly proud of,—I owe it to my worthy friend the Rector,—I owe it to the merry-hearted little girl who has been so shamefully dealt with,—as well as to the charming one of whom my anxious inquiries have been able to find out nothing but good, and whom I hope soon to fold to my heart as a daughter!"—

In a moment Reresby was in his arms, and both were silent.

"And, above all," added the deeply-moved father, as soon as he could recover his utterance, "I owe it to that Almighty Being who has surrounded my path with the blessings of life; and will surely exact of one who has been made so happy, that he render others happy in return."

No counter-argument was necessary. Mordaunt spoke like an oracle; and, grateful and

overjoyed, his son had already *almost* forgiven the Squire those vile and gratuitous slanders, which had proved the means of bringing about an event so little hoped-for.

"I scarcely dare mention, just now, the name of the Freshleys, my dear father," added the happy young man, "lest it should bring before your mind's eye the handsome house in town, and good establishment, and submissive little wife, with which it once appeared connected. But let it be some comfort to you to know, that there is still a chance of Burtsmill's being enjoyed by your grandchildren!—I had a letter yesterday from Tom, in which, though he speaks much of his examination, he talks so much more of the misery of finding himself a hundred miles distant from the engine chimneys which most people are so glad to escape from, that—"

"Stuff and nonsense!" interrupted Mordaunt, with a good-humoured smile. "Do you suppose I don't know all about it? For

what purpose did you fancy I packed off your brother into Lancashire last Christmas?—I should have found it twice as hard a matter to forgive your infatuation for the daughter of the Squire, had I not known your brother to be far better suited than yourself both to Claudia and her uncle!—Nothing further on the subject, however, if you please, till after the examination.—For when we come to the scratch, I am afraid my friend Freshley will be sadly disappointed at having to put up with second best; and Tom will be all the more thought of at Burtsmill, if he present himself as a suitor, sinking under university honours."

"You really think, my dear father, that there exist places and people still influenced by such barren laurels?"

"What think you of Settringham Abbey? What think you makes Sir William look upon that learned oaf of his as a Solon, but his senior wranglership and the F.R.S. appended

to his name?—It was a source of indescribable bitterness to even the Melfonts, that their son George should have stopped so far short of the distinctions achieved by a certain Reresby Mordaunt, who wore no gold tassel to his cap."

"In that case, I pardon the besotment of Burtsmill!"

"*Besotment* is a severe word.—We prize our salvers and flagons the more for having the Hall mark upon them, in proof that they are of standard value. And trust me, my dear boy, that no man, whether top-sawyer or bottom,—whether destined to a curate's wooden settle or the woolsack,—gets on the worse in the world for having taken a high degree!—Besides, if Tom have the good fortune to secure this excellent match, no reason that he should not hereafter figure in parliament, and ensure double honour to our name."—

By these arguments, Reresby was overjoyed

to perceive that the sacrifice of feeling meditated by his father, gave him less pain than, at one time, might have been expected. People undergoing a deep mortification have seldom courage to look to the bright side of things. Much of his philosophy, however, was attributed by his son to immersion in the civilizing stream of that vast metropolis, where Self dwindles into a molecule.—Sentiments which, within sight of the steeple of Deanwold, might have expanded into dragons and wyverns, became very small deer in an atmosphere which possesses the power of diminishing every object viewed through its medium.—

It became the policy of Beresby, therefore, to keep his father in town, and in his excellent intentions, till some irrecoverable step had been taken; and, on pretence of wanting his company while he went in search of the order for the House of Commons, which had so curiously led the way to a stormy discus-

sion ending in so glorious a rainbow, Reresby contrived to drag his father where he was sure to fall in the way of Sir John Grovynor Grovynor; who not only insisted on detaining his country neighbour in London to join a dinner party that day at his house, but carried him off in his Brougham (looking, as Reresby saucily observed, like a double-kernelled nut), to visit half a dozen patentees of new inventions, calculated to smooth the ways of this world of ruts and inequalities.

When left alone with his happy thoughts, the bosom of the enraptured young man became almost too narrow to contain them! Since his first encounter with Magdalen in the meadows where Don and Donna pounced upon her as a fit object for the game-bag, never had he felt so much in love!—All he had recently heard from Emma of her cousin's sufferings for his sake; of her gentle and endearing qualities, and the sad life she was leading; and, above all, all he had seen in London of

the wilfulness and recklessness of other women, conspired to bring out, with more than its original beauty and freshness, the lovely image imprinted on his heart. Like Lady Madrepore's autograph of John Tradescant, the faded characters arose in all their pristine distinctness, when exposed to chemical action. He seemed to tread on air. His bosom's lord sat as lightly on its throne as Taglioni on a daisy. Lucky that the grand questions of the session were at an end, and the orators of the day left to chew the cud of sweet and bitter laurels; for, in his present mood, the honourable member for Castle Dangan ran some danger of addressing "Mr. Speaker" as "my beloved Magdalen!"

The prospect of belonging to the Cromer Hall family was, indeed, something of a drawback. The narrow-minded Squire, (a better man than whom might have been carved out of grit-stone),—the Mrs. Glasse of a mother, whose storeroom was her petty universe,—

and the coarse unlettered brothers, of whose ruffianly habits much worse was known to Reresby than to his father,—were certainly untempting kindred. But, after passing them in review,

came wandering by
A spirit like an angel;—

an angel, whom it would be happiness indeed to translate to a more genial sphere! After all, it was better, perhaps, that her family should be so detestable!—Her happiness in wedlock would be all the more complete from having nothing to regret among those she left behind at Cromer Hall. His optimism, in short, was optissimé.

On joining Lady Mary Grovynor Grovynor's dinner-party, poor Reresby seemed like one inspired. His lips were touched with fire. Darting with brilliant eloquence

From grave to gay,—from lively to severe,—

he so electrified the company by high spirits that passed for wit, and fluency that sounded

like sense, and, above all, by resuming the debate of the preceding night with a ripeness of humour that "Punch" might have envied (and which Cad Rowlandson made his fortune for the remainder of the season by imitating wherever he dined, about as ably as one of Teniers' pictures is copied on the pipeclay bowl of a tobacco-pipe!) that Sir John Grovynor Grovynor sat revolving it in his mind whether a patent could not be taken out for him, or at least his good things rendered copyright.—

Nothing he would not have done to render other people as happy as himself! He would have stinted in his talk and cried "ay!" had Lady Belvedere beset him with her usual accusations against the new Lady Fauconberg, of being the most Jenny-Jonesish of the daughters of the land that gives its name to the heir apparent of the throne; protesting that the Welsh heiress had been heard to order her coachman drive to "Lady Pelve-

dere's in Pelgrave Square." Or he would have bestowed upon Lady Madrepore his Cochin-Chinese Amulet, or the point of a Sphinx's jasper tail, knocked off by his own hammer at Memphis.—No possible sacrifice would have appeared too great!—

"Why have you not been in Belgrave Square to-day?" inquired Sir Herbert Glynne, snatching him by the sleeve, as he attempted to flit through the crowd with which Mary Grovynor Grovynor was in the habit of prolonging through a whole evening the tediousness of her dinner.—"Lady Bel. was in hopes that, now Doctor and Miss Primrose are gone back to Wakefield, Squire Thornhill might fall once more to the share of Lady Blarney and Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs!"

"My father is in town, and I have had worlds of things to do to-day," replied Reresby. "But, if you see Lady Belvedere, pray tell her I will call upon her, if possible,

before I leave town. I should be grieved that she thought me negligent!"—

"Don't distract yourself on her account!" said his friend, surprised at his unusual unction. "I don't believe her ladyship to be in immediate danger of prussic acid!—Indeed, seeing that you have not called these three days, and finding it a bore to have many-buttoned pages sent after me with triangular notes, inquiring what has become of my friend Mr. Mordaunt, I put it into her head, yesterday, that Dick Lovell was going into a decline for her sake; a bait so readily swallowed, that I am not without hopes of seeing Knightsbridge and Sheet Street barracks cut out the Houses of Lords and Commons!"

"But what had Lord Richard done to you, that you should bring such a corvée down in judgment on him?"—

"*Done?*—What has he done since he was born, but convert full bottles into empty ones; and, being squeamish,

Damn the climate like a lord!—

However, if not amusing in himself, he will be the cause of amusement to others. In the first place, think of the fun of seeing Mark Trevor playing *violino secondo* in a deep-drawn sigh; and of Lady Bel.'s amazement at finding that the Shadow will be a lost Shadow, unless she can find in her heart 'lodgings for *two* single gentlemen!' "—

"Too bad,—too bad!" cried Reresby, though laughing heartily at what he condemned.

"Above all, think of the *potage* that will be served up in Belgrave Square, when my charming cousin (who invariably extends her hospitalities to the *alentours* of her reigning Romeo) intermingles the cornets of the Household Brigade with Fauconberg's sages and poets, who have not yet deserted the establishment!—How each faction will wonder at the other!—Since Pizarro's expedition astonished the weak minds of the Mexicans, nothing like their mutual amazement!—But what are you

in such a confounded hurry to get away for?"—cried Sir Herbert, on finding it likely that, from his friend's struggles for self-extrication, his button would remain in his hand.

"I am looking for a pair."

"For the remainder of the session?"—

"*That*, alas! is past praying for!—But till Wednesday next.—I have promised to accompany my father back to Deasmarsh."—

"And is it quite certain that you cannot continue to keep him and yourself in town another day?" anxiously inquired Sir Herbert.

"For what purpose? On the contrary, I am dying to get into Northamptonshire!"—

"To the feet of Miss Cromer?"—

"To the feet of Miss Cromer!" replied Reresby—not thinking it necessary to remind his friend that there were more Miss Cromers in the parish of Deaswold than the one whom the Countess of Belvedere honoured with her jealousy.—And Sir Herbert, whose object in wishing to keep the Mordaunts in town was

simply to obtain an answer, ere he lost sight of them, to the letter in which he had ventured to explain to Matilda all his misconceptions,—all his enlightenment,—all his penitence,—and, above all, his deep and devoted attachment,—was forced to keep his own counsel.

If the surmises expounded by the Rector's daughter were correct, who knows but he might be invited to accompany the father and son to the happy spot that seemed about to be converted into the temple of Hymen?—Who knows but, in total defiance of Lindley Murray, the superlative might be made to admit of comparison; and *two* happiest of men make their appearance by the self-same mail-train at Deasmarsh Park!—

CHAPTER XXIV.

L'intelligence ne trouve qu'en elle-même l'aliment de sa vie. Sois juste et fort. Vis en toi-même et cherche ce qui ne périt point. Tu ne trouveras pas la paix dans les choses. Cherche la dans ton cœur. La force est la loi de la nature : la puissance, c'est la volonté : l'énergie dans les peines est meilleure que l'apathie dans les voluptés.

MANUEL DE PSEUSOPHANES.

Great as had been the satisfaction of the Rector and his daughter on their way home to Deaswold, and intense their delight in feasting their eyes once more on the fair face of the country, still more elate were the spirits of Mordaunt and his son while pursuing the self-same road.—Search England over, and you would not have found two happier people; —the father from having just obtained a glorious victory over himself; the son from knowing that he held in his hand a pass-key

to the garden of Eden.—Happiness and the object of his love were about to become his own for ever!—

The blood of the Man of Capital must have been "snowbroth," indeed, had it not flowed the freer while traversing the prosperous and influential railroad, devised by his spirit of enterprise, and forwarded by his activity,—towards a district which he had rescued from stagnation so as to constitute himself its second providence: a district where, under his auspices, swampy fields had become a noble park,—unwholesome hovels, commodious cottages,—discontented labourers, thriving workmen,—and, above all, mischievous and savage urchins, well-conditioned, well-taught children, promising a better order of things hereafter.

For, if there still lingered sufficient moral malaria in the village of Deaswold to engender infanticide and slander, it was thanks to the class called into existence by the sordid su-

pineness of the Squire; who had refused to institute schools for his tenantry, lest their Helotism should grow weary of slavery, and those who learned to read, forget to work.

But, at the present moment, when the warm heart of the prosperous man was learning to contemplate the bright home of his creation in a new light, as the cradle of a future generation, a spot where he should behold the happiness of his excellent son perfected, and roses springing among his laurels,—no wonder that his heart overflowed with a double measure of milk and honey!—

He had been slow to adopt Magdalen; but, once adopted, she had become at once a child of his own. He longed to tell her so. He longed to tell her how he had tried to discover flaws in the "one entire and perfect crysolite" so treasured by his son; and tried in vain.—He longed to ask her forgiveness for not having loved her at first sight, and overlooked that the Juliet of his Romeo was born a Capulet.—

Great excuses were owing to her, as well as long arrears of happiness; and both should be bestowed with compound interest and an ungrudging hand.

It would be as easy as pleasant to brighten the lot of one accustomed to so scanty a portion of the pastimes of life. From all that Mordaunt had gleaned of his future daughter-in-law from her uncle,—from her village pensioners and pitying neighbours,—he fancied that he understood her tastes, and he had discovered the precise way of making her happy. He was certain that she would like Deasmarsh. It would sever her from none of the objects she had loved in youth.—As a matron, she would kneel in the same church which had witnessed her maiden orisons. She would listen to the teaching of the same pious pastor. She would hail the burst of Spring in the same bank of violets, and sun herself under the same propitious skies. The foreground of the picture, indeed, would be

coloured with brighter hues, and the atmosphere she breathed be laden, for the first time, with the balmy incense of love and joy! And, as he pondered upon all this, (considering that thirty years of his life had been spent in the grimy environs of Burtsmill) it was amazing how romantic the old gentleman was becoming. A second summer was sending up its after-grass in his path.

As to the young lover, to follow the vagaries of *his* imagination, to portray the wild confusion of joyful presages flitting like humming birds through his fancy, would be like endeavouring to paint the rainbow,—a task defying the palette of Rubens himself. The idea of clasping to his heart his beloved Magdalen with the sanction of *his* father and her own, and repaying by the most public deference of homage his sense of the injury her good name had incurred for his sake, made him fancy that even a speed of thirty miles an hour was as slow as Settringham Abbey.

Like Imogen, he wanted a "horse with wings," to bear him where he might feast his eyes once more upon the fairest of human faces,—the face whose smiles were all his own.

It might have amused an indifferent spectator to hear the father and son playing with each other at didactic, when their hearts were over-brimming with boyish glee.

"Admit, my dear father," said Reresby, "that I earned my present happiness, by the implicit obedience I showed you, when driven from Deasmarsh, last winter, like Adam out of Paradise, without so much as a farewell look!"—

"As I had then reason to trust that the engagement might still be broken off," replied his father, "my harshness was meant for kindness;—kindness to *you* and justice to *her*."—

"Admit, at least, then," persevered Reresby, —determined to be praised,—"that I deserve

some credit for having settled down at once to business on my arrival in London; instead of letting grow my beard, or playing the despairing Orlando, or sending to the devil the constituency which had sent *me* to parliament?"—

"Are you *quite* sure that the smiles of celebrity did not a little outshine, just then, those of Miss Magdalen Cromer?" was his father's arch rejoinder. "Nay, don't defend yourself *too* vehemently; or I shall feel sure of having hit home! At all events, I perceive that the ill-effects of an atmosphere, apt at first to make people dizzy, have thoroughly worn off. Whatever may have been the case in May, before the great letters and Lady Belvedere had lost their magic power—Well, well!" cried he, interrupting himself,—when he saw his son out of countenance—"let us say no more about it!—All is right *now*; and Sir Proteus has found his way back to his *true* love. And, by the way, apropos to the

fair Silvia, pray tell me, my dear boy, whether you ever happened to hear my daughter-in-law say whether she had a fancy for sapphires? —I was carried, yesterday, to a vanity-shop by Lady Mary double G—, (as our friend Glynne calls her) to look out for a bracelet to carry back to Matilda; and so, to save time and trouble, I even made a double purchase. Now I have two daughters, I must learn, you know, to buy in couples.—Having snatched a sly glance now and then at church at Magdalen's beautiful dark hair, I flatter myself I have chosen what will become her."—

What joy to hear his father already talking in such a strain! In time, how fond and proud would he not become of the beautiful and blameless being devoted to the happiness of his son!—

"I cannot help anticipating some amusement," said he, on finding his father disposed to pass so lightly over the disagreeables and difficulties of the case, "from witnessing the

sudden *ratting* of the Squire;—and the ease with which wealth, so abhorrent in his eyes, will lose its offence when connected with the mighty dynasty of Cromer. He is just the man to become as cringing and sycophantic as he has been hitherto brutal."

"Don't talk of *him*, if you wish me to remain happy and comfortable!" rejoined his father, with a sigh. "If your dear Magdalen had only been Jacob's daughter instead of his, I should not have a wish ungratified in the world! It will cost me, I own, a grievous pang to make friendly overtures to Mr. Cromer of Cromer Hall; though, like yourself, I suspect the bait will be greedily snapped at."

In spite of so many interesting points to supply topics of conversation for the travellers, the few last stations made their appearance slowly. But when at length the Deesmarsh woods, glooming in the horizon, met the eyes of Reresby and his father just where

they had appeared like harbingers of home to the parson and the parson's daughter, their hearts became too full to say a word.

"Is my carriage waiting?" was Mordaunt's hasty inquiry, on stepping from the train at the Darley Station, without reflecting that he had afforded no intimation of the probability of his arrival. And the answer he received of —"No, sir. You are not expected. Miss Mordaunt brought a parcel addressed to you in London, to go by the three o'clock train; and seemed so anxious about its going, that I fancy it contained letters."

Additional reason for jumping into a fly and making the best of their way home; instead of the pleasant walk they had originally planned.

"How lovely and how tranquil the place looks!" cried Reresby, as the "fly-b'y" put his stout nag to its fullest trot, after passing the West Lodge gates, in honour of conveying through their fine domain the grandest folks

of the neighbourhood. "How famously well the plantations have got on this summer! How green it will appear to Magdalen, after the drought and nakedness of Cromer Hall!"

To render the pleasant surprise of his unexpected visit still greater to his mother and sister, he proposed, as they approached the house, to dismiss the fly, the coming wheels of which would be premonitory—and make their entrance by the garden front, through the pleasure-grounds; into which opened the saloon where, in summer time, the family spent their evenings. But scarcely had Reresby caught sight of the room and its occupants, when he repented his project, and would fain have retraced his steps to traverse the hall in the usual way. Something was sorely amiss! Matilda sat bathed in tears, with her mother leaning fondly over her chair.

Having seized his father by the arm with the intention of warning him of the state of the case, poor Reresby, whose heart had

been previously beating with joyous emotions, found no voice to express his uneasiness.

"Wait a moment, and let *me* go forward and announce you," cried his father, unwilling to startle those who appeared in such deep affliction. And the moment he entered the room, his son could discern the "Thank God, you are come!" which accompanied the affectionate embraces of both mother and daughter.

"I am not only come, but have brought Reresby with me!" said he, wisely coming to the point at once. And almost before the words were pronounced, Matilda had dried her eyes and darted out upon the lawn, to bring in the welcome guest.

Great, however, as was their joy at seeing him, more especially as both his aspect and his father's announced that their errand was satisfactory, neither Mrs. Mordaunt nor her daughter could conceal the distress of mind under which they laboured.

"No bad news of Tom?" inquired Mordaunt, in tones so low that he seemed afraid to let the words come out of his mouth. And when his wife replied at once that she "had heard nothing from Cambridge," he glanced round the room as much as to say, "Then are you not ashamed of crying?—Is it not well with all whom your soul loveth?"—

"We wrote to you, dear papa, by the evening train," said Matilda.

"So I heard, my dear, at the Station."

"Not at all expecting you to-night," added his wife, "I was in hopes my letter would hurry you down."

"Why, what has been the matter here?" said her husband, anxiously.

"*Here*, nothing!—But sad, sad news at the Rectory."

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed Mordaunt, while his son seemed already preparing to hasten off and afford whatever aid might be wanting.

"Our worthy friend, Jacob Cromer, is ill —*seriously* ill!"—

"He was perfectly well the day he dined here?"

"Events have occurred since, which have smitten him to the dust."

"My dear wife, you are keeping me on tenter-hooks!" remonstrated the breathless Mordaunt.

"Only because I hardly know how to word all I have to explain," replied Mrs. Mordaunt; glancing at her daughter and son. A moment's reflection on the imminence of the danger, however, strengthened her mind and relieved her scruples.

"I suspect you are aware," she resumed, "though you never confided the fact to *me*, that for some time past the most infamous reports have prevailed in the village and neighbourhood—"

"About poor little Emma?—I know it, my dear! But certain explanations of a very

have been readily distinguished between them, except that they probably regarded it as *impossible* for one so closely kept as the Squire's daughter to escape from home) is by no means the worst feature of the case. The brothers, as you are aware, have not spoken for months; and Jacob's political conversion, and the brilliant success in public life (if I may say so before him) of Reresby, have tended of late to aggravate the Squire into still bitterer animosity. From what I am able to gather, there is nothing that has not been advanced by the elder brother, and echoed by his brutal son, against the Rector and his daughter, to whosoever would lend an ear to their abuse. Two days ago, however, at a meeting of Protectionists that took place at Basinghill under the auspices of Aristobulus Settringham, he hazarded these aspersions in the most public manner. After alluding to the refusal to call an anti-league meeting at Deaswold, which he was pleased to attribute to our influence, he

added that, with two resident magistrates in the parish, its justice business was worse done than in any other in the county; seeing that they played into each other's hands, and that what the one said, the other would swear to."

"But this regards *me* as much as Jacob," said Mordaunt, gravely; and already, Reresby trembled at the idea of new insults offered to his father by Cromer Hall.

"Ay, but it was at the heart of Jacob, and not yours, the deadly aim was levelled!" added Mrs. Mordaunt; "for he proceeded to declare, that, though you were in full possession of facts concerning the infant found drowned in the Deas which would send to the gallows a young woman who had still the audacity to show herself among honest men's daughters as though she were not a wanton and a murderess, you stifled the charge and suffered the criminal to sneak out of the county, only lest the shadow of the crime should darken your own door-sill!"—

"By Heavens, I will make the fellow eat his words before he's a day older!" cried Mordaunt, shaking his clenched hand in uncontrollable exasperation at this infamous accusation.—And by the troubled countenance of Reresby, it was easy to perceive the difficulty he found in restraining similar indications of rage.—

"At any other moment than the present," added Mrs. Mordaunt, unwilling to excite further resentment, yet painfully aware that the *whole* truth ought to be disclosed to her husband and son, "I am convinced that, saving among the class from which he appears to derive information, his labourers and servants, Mr. Cromer would not have obtained so much as a hearing for his insinuations.—But for the last few weeks, political animosities have run so high in this county, and more especially in this neighbourhood, that a few of his auditors who fancied themselves aggrieved by the triumph of Free Trade, were

disposed to believe any harm or wickedness of its apostles. — I grieve to add that this man's slanderous hints did not receive the rebuke we had a right to expect."—

"On the contrary," interposed Matilda, her voice thrilling with indignation,—"many applauded,—and *all* approved!"—

"Yet I *ought* to have friends at Basinghill," mused Mordaunt.—"The railroad has avowedly doubled the value of land there; and the village school-houses were erected at my cost!"—

"What considerations of gratitude or duty, my dear father, are ever found to weigh against party virulence!" — demanded Reresby. "The monopolists would, I verily believe, burn—*not* in effigy,—but in the flesh,—every living being that has assisted in knocking off the last rivet of our feudal chains!"—

"To do the Basinghill people justice," rejoined his sister,—"Mr. Cromer won chiefly on their minds by one of those plausible pieces

of claptrap, which,—to our shame, or honour, be it spoken—are apt to touch the chord of every human heart. In attacking the equity of my father and his brother, he declared that, had *he* been the examining magistrate in the affair of Deasmill, instead of stifling inquiry as *they* have done, he would have sifted the matter honestly to the bottom,—even though it involved the credit, nay, the very life of a child of his own."—

"He said so, did he?" said Mordaunt, drawing his lips closer together.—"Good!—The words may still be brought home to him!—The business is not yet at rest."—

A single glance of Reresby's anxious eyes towards his father seemed to require further explanation!—But Mrs. Mordaunt was already resuming her narrative.

"Do not fancy, my dear husband," said she, "that *such* words were the worst uttered by Mr. Cromer!—What I have told you is a mere preliminary to proceedings which have

struck, I fear, a death-blow to our poor friend at the Rectory!—After the Basinghill meeting, the Squire returned home, on foot, followed by two or three of his tenants, and accompanied by several persons from the Northampton side of the county, whom he had induced to attend the meeting; — among others, Vickers, the attorney, who has been the chief instigant of his hostilities towards *us*;— *all* heated by wrangling over party matters, and the refreshment they had taken."—

"Or, in other words," interrupted her son, "their heads hot with drink, and their hearts with hatred!"—

"When, unluckily, on reaching Basingwood, where it slopes towards Deasmill,— they caught sight at a distance of two females; who at sight of them attempted concealment. This excited attention; and the poor girls were too eagerly followed not to be detected; when, alas! on coming up with them, the Squire had the double mortification of dis-

covering in the fugitives his daughter and his niece."

"But why mortification?" — demanded Mordaunt. "Is it so great a crime for two young girls to enjoy a summer walk in the woods, this sultry weather?"

"You forget that all intercourse between the cousins had been rigorously interdicted. Profiting by her uncle's absence with the Basinghill Protectionists, it seems Emma had contrived to appoint a meeting with his daughter."

"For which I alone am accountable," interposed Reresby.—"Before she quitted London, I exacted of Emma Cromer a promise that she would see my poor dear Magdalen, and explain to her those engagements towards my father which prevented my communicating with her by letter."—

Mordaunt heaved a profound sigh. It was far from the first time he had repented having dealt so preremptorily and precipitately with his son.

"On detecting his daughter's act of disobedience," resumed Mrs. Mordaunt, "terrible was Mr. Cromer's explosion of wrath towards her! He was with difficulty restrained from some act of violence; but with his niece, he dealt mercilessly,—*mercilessly!*—actually daring to apply to this dear inoffensive girl, in presence of half a dozen strangers, terms the most opprobrious in the language,—terms that should never reach a woman's ears;—taxing her not alone with clandestine meetings with *you*, Reresby, at old Mr. Clemson's, under circumstances the most disgraceful,—"

It was now Mordaunt's turn to glance anxiously towards his son.

"But with having connived with you—I really hardly know,"—continued Mrs. Mordaunt, shuddering and turning pale—"how to continue this story.—But it appears that this wrongheaded, wronghearted man has gathered what *he* considers circumstantial evidence, that the child so cruelly put out of

the way at Deasmill, some weeks ago, was the victim of Emma!"—

"Monstrous!"— indignantly exclaimed Mordaunt and his son, at one and the same moment.

"But surely," continued the elder, "*surely* the former part of Cromer's accusations extorted from his daughter some sort of explanation?"

"As soon as his violence would allow her to be heard!—But, for some time, there was no getting him to listen to her declaration that it was *herself*, and not her cousin, who had met you at Clemson's;—that the mourning dress of a similar form, worn by both, must have misled his informant,—which was the more likely as the Squire's daughter was known never to set foot in Deasmarsh, or indeed to quit the grounds of Cromer Hall."

"And when he heard this honest avowal?"

"He either disbelieved or affected to disbelieve it; pretending that, in a fit of Quixotism,

or hoping to disarm him, Magdalen was taking her cousin's delinquencies upon herself.—So far from abating a word of his accusations, irritated by what he called his daughter's insolent interference, he proceeded sneeringly to declare that if ever again he detected her in communication with the wretched girl who had disgraced his family name, he would himself instigate such further investigations of the Deasmill business, at the Quarter Sessions, as would drive out of the country both her and the fine folks who held their head as high at Deasmarsh as though they had never been chapmen and dealers elsewhere."

"Unfortunate man!"—was the temperate rejoinder of Mordaunt. "If he only knew that, over his own homestead, the sword of justice hangs suspended by a single hair!"

"And Emma?"—demanded Reresby, addressing his mother with anxious solicitude;—"Emma, whom I know to be everything that is generous and spirited, how did

she find courage to sustain this insolent calumny?"—

"She found it in the firmness with which her cousin, regardless of her father's wrath,—regardless of the presence of so many witnesses,—persisted in denouncing *herself* as the guilty person;—guilty of the Deasmill meetings;—guilty of having broken her father's interdictions. With respect to the murdered child, she said, (and *then* alone her voice faltered!)—it was a mystery still in the hands of GOD; who, in His own good time, would bring the guilty to justice. But she declared that, as she stood in His fearful presence, neither Emma nor herself had more concern in it than as regarded their abhorrence of the crime."—

"Right!—good!—Well-felt, and well-expressed!" cried Mordaunt, with an approving nod. "And what said the brute to her vindication?"—

"Just what might have been expected of

a man whose fevered brains were doubly excited by a fatiguing walk in harvest weather; —swore that she was as bad as her cousin and a disgrace to her family. Had not one of the persons present, a degree more decent or more sober than the rest, interfered for Miss Cromer's protection, she would have been ignominously driven home by her father, like a beast of burthen. — But this man, (the father of a family) afforded her his arm and protection back to the Hall."

"And to think that one cannot this very moment withdraw my poor Magdalen from the tyranny of such a monster!"—cried Reresby, starting from his place.—

"As to poor little Emma," continued Mrs. Mordaunt,—"you will readily conceive in what a state of mind she reached the Rectory.—On hearing only a thousandth part of what had occurred, her father rushed off to the Hall; and the interview between the brothers was, I fear, of a nature terrible

to think of. For, in the course of an hour, Jacob was brought back, scarcely sensible, in his brother's carriage; and medical aid soon arrived, sent for express by the Squire."—

"And they actually think him in danger?"—

"Not in danger of *death*. But Dr. Palliser declares that his mind has received a shock the result of which cannot for some time be determined."

"So excellent,—so inoffensive a creature —to be sacrificed to the rampant cruelty of that ill-conditioned wretch!" — exclaimed Matilda.

"What grieves me more than all," observed Mordaunt, with glistening eyes, "is the share we have, if not innocently, certainly *unintentionally*, had in the business!"

"Innocently, — *innocently*, — my dear father!" cried Matilda.—"When did *you* ever commit a wilful wrong to any living soul?"—

"I trust not. But, according to the com-

mon lot of sinful human nature, my dear child, I am not proof against the influence of my prejudices. Incited by *them*, I have, perhaps, suffered myself to remain blind, when clear-sightedness was a duty; and supine, when it became me to be active. I fear that, while still in hopes of breaking Reresby's engagement, I was guilty of slight and unkindness towards the uncle and cousin of Magdalen!—I did not see my way clearly,—I *would* not see my way clearly!—Everything connected with the name of Cromer had become hateful to me!"—

And by their silence and downcast looks, his wife and daughter seemed to admit that they "stood accountant for as great a fault."

"And now, my dear boy, let us hurry off to the Rectory, and ascertain what it is in our power to do towards aiding and comforting the friends we have treated so scurvily!"—said Mordaunt, rising in haste.—

Nor was there much avail in Mrs. Mor-

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"We had not been ten minutes returned from the Rectory," resumed Mrs. Mordaunt, "when you so unexpectedly made your appearance just now. I left the invalid dozing; and Emma, though anxious, composed. Believe me, Mordaunt, you had better not disturb them to-night!—Besides, you have not dined. Wait, at all events, till you have had some dinner."—

But even dinner, that most eloquent of special pleaders, failed to convince the travellers that, however weary or hungry, they had a right to postpone, by a single moment, the expression of their sympathy.

Off they started across the park;—instinctively following the path towards the East Lodge suggested by Mrs. Mordaunt on the day when their earnest colloquy close to Deasmill had convinced spy Drewe, who bore

the tale straight to his employer, that the two fathers were plotting together the surest mode of enabling the two delinquents, whose honour was so dear to them, to evade the detection of justice.—

CHAPTER XXV.

O my dear father!—Restoration! hang
Thy med'cine on my lips; and let this kiss
Repair thy violent harms.

SHAKSPEARE.

Had the widow of the late celebrated Sir Nicholas Barton witnessed the greeting between the Honourable Member for Castle Dangan and her niece, she would doubtless have decided that Mr. Mordaunt's errand at Deaswold Rectory could only be to solicit her hand for his son: more especially as the worthy cotton-spinner addressed her as his "dear child," and could hardly refrain from tears, on seeing the alteration which a few days of intense misery had wrought in her appearance.

For if the Mordaunts had bitterly reviled themselves for the diminution of their neighbourly attentions to Jacob Cromer, what were the self-upbraidings of his daughter!—When she saw him brought home speechless, with only sufficient consciousness remaining to press her hand while she assisted to place him in the bed from which perchance he never more might rise, she fell upon her knees beside it, and prayed for forgiveness; — *not* of her father, the father who knew not how to take offence;—but that Father who is in Heaven, and in whose hand Vengeance abides!—

For how careless had she become of late of *him* whose care for *her* was unceasing!—How much had she suffered her interest for other people to interfere with her filial love! How composedly had she borne being parted from him!—Yet *he*—the moment he heard of an injury wrought against his child, had suffered such anguish that the very fountain-head of his life was stirred!—He was

dying of the mere agony of hearing her traduced!

Without surmising how long the sorrow of seeing her affections estranged from him, and the fear that grief might be in store for her, had been sapping his springs of life,—without dreaming what emotions had been swelling his warm heart, while, with seeming abstraction, he watched her so pre-engrossed and so ungrateful, — one thing was clear,—that her uncle's charge against her had broken his heart!—

All the tenderness lavished by that good father on her happy childhood, now came back upon her mind; all the instruction patiently imparted,—all the indulgence accorded to her girlish faults,—all the partial measure of their household comforts assigned exclusively to herself!— His frequent and fond recurrence to the memory of her mother, untimely taken from him, by which he had endeavoured to train her up to excellence and

soften her heart towards himself, brought reminiscences of the time when, during her repining after Reresby, (the momentary idol of her girlhood's fancy) he had redoubled his almost womanlike thoughtfulness for her comfort. Without hesitation, he had torn himself from his duties and fireside, to alienate her heart from its folly !—

And what had she given him in return for all this?—Divided affection,—lukewarm duty, an unobservant eye,—an unthankful heart !— She had dared to treat the man who was so good,—nay, so *great*, in the nature of his functions, the fervour of his faith, the simplicity of his mind and blamelessness in the sight of God and man,—as an object secondary to herself !—

No wonder that, in spite of the assuaging kindness of Mrs. Mordaunt and Matilda, the poor girl's pillow had remained sleepless since her father's melancholy seizure; or rather, that her pillow she had never seen—for

she still kept watch by his bedside with the zeal of the most devoted of nurses.—For, though apparently unconscious, he recognised her. Something of a smile brightened his sunken face whenever she bent over him; and once or twice, when incoherent words or a faint whisper escaped his lips, and his medical attendants drew near to interpret what they hoped might be the expression of a wish or suggestion of a remedy, his solicitude invariably related to "Emma." He was afraid his poor little daughter would overfatigue herself by her attendance.

One comfort indeed she had experienced, greater than even the friendly sympathy of Deasmarsh. The moment it transpired in the village that the Rector was dangerously ill, the reaction of popular justice suddenly placed him before his parishioners in the light in which he formerly stood,—as the most active, humane, and benignant of parish priests. Those who had stood firm in their

reverence towards one who not only taught them all that was best and holiest, but practised what he preached, hurried off to the Rectory to inquire, condole, and tender their aid. But even such as had been led away by partizanship to the Squire into an over-credulous belief of his brother's unworthiness, if they did not already recant, stood aloof and shamefaced, while all around them vied in proclaiming the charities and good neighbourship of the friend they were about to lose.

"There may be two minds," said Farmer Richards, the oracle of the blacksmith's shop, (who, since the repeal of the Corn Laws, had abstained from touching his hat to his landlord,) "there may perhaps be two minds about the good this parish has gained from the stir and fever and commotioning of having a man of capital settle down amongst us.—But there ben't but *one*,—or there oughtn't to be but *one*,—about the loss we should have

in changing our good, steady, God-fearing parson, who was born and has lived among us and feels for us all as if one of ourselves, against e'er another in the land of Squire Cromer's providing."—

At present, however, if Dr. Palliser's opinion were to be relied on, the Squire's nomination was not likely to be in request. The sick man had rallied.—Copious bleeding, combined with strong restoratives, had given new impetus to the paralyzed functions of nature. His senses were comparatively restored; and no objection being made by the medical attendants to Mordaunt's earnest desire for a sight of the sufferer, he was admitted to the bedside.—A feeble cry, that burst as from the heart of poor Jacob when his really attached neighbour gave loose to his feelings of sympathy, denoted perfect consciousness of the presence of a friend.

A moment afterwards, however, he recurred to his customary call for "Emma;" and,

when he saw, as she pressed forward to answer him, the affectionate,—the almost paternal manner in which she was supported by Mordaunt, a smile of joy irradiated his face. His daughter,—his calumniated daughter,—the daughter he was about to leave,—would not be friendless when he was gone!—

"All this is heart-breaking work, Reresby!" said Mordaunt to his son, when, after more than an hour's sojourn at the Rectory, they took their way leisurely back across the Park, in the delicious stillness of a July night,—the dews fragrant around them, and the evening star trembling over them, as though at finding itself alone in that vast firmament. "I would fain have had the epoch of your marriage unclouded by a single care! And, alas!

> sorrows come not single spies,
> But in battalions—

If we lose this good man, Reresby, never, *never* shall I forgive myself!"—

"We shall *not* lose him, my dear father. Palliser promises us that he will do well!" cried the young man.—"Providence will spare him to the prayers of so many by whom he is valued. His constitution has undergone a sad shock; but his health was previously robust."—

"No,—I thought poor Jacob ailing when he was down here nearly a month ago."—

"Out of spirits,—not out of *health!*"—

"At all events, you will admit that his illness is a sad kill-joy!"—

"And I am the more grieved at it, from my unintentional share in his vexations. But, (forgive me, father,) the thought uppermost in my mind on returning to Deaswold is and *must* be Magdalen!—Magdalen has suffered nearly as much as her uncle."—

"*Too* true, alas!—for, as the time approaches for my explanation with John Cromer, I shrink from the task, as from coming in contact with a reptile!"—

"If in the first instance you were to write to him?"—

"Still, interviews must follow!"—

"At all events, surely it would be better to break the ice by a letter, asking for the hand of his daughter. *That* prospect might perhaps reduce the wild beast to a milder mood, and prepare him to receive you with decency."—

"But I have first other explanations to insist upon.—I must have justice rendered to Emma and her father!"—said Mordaunt, in a tone almost reproving,—so much of egotism did he perceive in Reresby's evident conviction that the world might be swallowed up by an earthquake, provided Magdalen were safe!

"But, if you visit him early to-morrow morning, as you propose," argued his son, "you will find him still surrounded by the people drawn hither by the Basinghill meeting:—more especially that pestilent attorney—"

"Never mind the pestilent attorney!" said

his father, as at that moment they reached his own hall-door, cheerful with its sun-like lamps and prompt attendance.—"*Fiat Justitia*, Reresby!—And now, let us sup and to bed; that we may be astir early to-morrow, in order to contend with these manifold vexations."—

Early astir he was; and, before the dew was off the grass, had visited the Rectory to satisfy himself that the doctor's prediction of an easier night had been verified.—"The sick man was still asleep."—No better answer could have been given. Milnward, too, had made his appearance, obedient to the summons despatched to him; and it was good to know that the office of the poor Rector was thus satisfactorily supplied.

Mordaunt was a little vexed that, even on his return from the Rectory, nor son nor daughter was present to meet him at the breakfast-table. For, how was he to guess that Matilda and her brother had sat up a couple of hours after the rest of the family

retired to rest, discussing the prospects of both? With the utmost patience did Miss Mordaunt listen to her brother's somewhat lengthy account of himself;—the momentary liking for Emma which had preceded his heart-felt attachment to her cousin,—and the momentary liking for Lady Belvedere, which might perchance have rendered him faithless to Magdalen, had not the Rector and his daughter so opportunely made their appearance in London to re-Deaswoldize his heart. When he described how Emma's account of her cousin's distress of mind, her gentle submission and devoted affection, to say nothing of her intelligence, loveliness, goodness and truth, had revived in his bosom its partially effaced impressions, his sister could not but admire, not alone his own frankness in the avowal, but the self-denying generosity of his informant.

But, if Matilda proved a patient auditress, she expected to be listened to in her turn, when it *came* to her turn to relate the story

of her own true love. As yet, she had not breathed a word to either of her parents of Sir Herbert Glynne's offer of his hand. But it was not exactly necessary for Reresby to wait the event of Jacob Cromer's convalescence, to be informed of the probability of his having to love as a brother-in-law the man so long treasured as his friend.

"Glynne?—Herbert Glynne?—Herbert in love with *you*—and *you* in love with Herbert?" cried he.—"Impossible, impossible!—You want to ascertain what degree of elasticity my credulity has acquired from the recent surprises to which I have been exposed!—But *this* is a thing I *must* have found out, had it existed!—You may as well attempt to persuade me that you have thoughts of becoming Mrs. Aristobulus Settringham!"—

"Thank you, my dear Reresby, for the standard of comparison you assign to Sir Herbert!—But time will show that nothing is more true—"

"Than that you rejected George Melfont and the coronet hovering over his head for the sake of my friend Glynne?"—

"And that my refusal of papa's proposal to take a house in town for my coming out, during the year you were both in the East, had precisely the same origin!"—

"There's a girl for you!"—cried Reresby, extending his hand and giving his sister's a hearty shake.—"And yet, Matty, there would have been more philosophy in what I always imagined your motive for declining a season in town, *i. e.* your dislike of having to choose between living among great people who looked down upon you, and little people, on whom you looked down!"—

"It was from my heart I derived my counsel, not my head!"

"And with this mutual attachment (which Glynne writes, and *you* declare to have existed ever since the days when you used to play at catscradle together in holiday time at Burtsmill) you were both so intensely stupid as not

to come to an understanding on the subject, when he was staying here last year?"—

"Even so, my dear brother!—But we were both sand-blind with jealousy."

"Blockheads!—*He*, of course, of that lump of aristocratic clay, George Melfont, — or rather of Melfont Park and its beautiful avenues,—the glory of the shire!—But of whom on earth were *you* jealous, Matilda?—Not a spinster save yourself and the two *pois chiches* of old maids at Basinghill, within ten miles of Deaswold!"

"Emma Cromer is much obliged to you!"

"*Emma* again?—you were actually jealous of poor little Emma?—*You*, Miss Mordaunt of Deasmarsh, with thirty thousand pounds and a face and figure that might sit for the portrait of Calypso? Fie, fie upon you!"—

"I deserve to be laughed at,—but I am not sure that I can bear it!"—

"Confess at least that Emma's fate is somewhat extraordinary! — By nature the most harmless and insignificant of GOD'S

creatures, she has not only been subject to infamous imputations from which the worst turpitude would recoil:—but an object of jealousy, at one and the same moment, to yourself and Lady Belvedere! It would not much surprise me to hear next that Ibrahim Pasha had bid a few millions of piastres for her, to carry her off to the land of crocodiles; where, by the by, she might run against George Melfont botanizing in the Delta; and, after exciting the envy of a whole harem, become an English viscountess at last!"—

"What will Magdalen say, my dear brother, if you talk so much about Emma?"

"If she be wise, that it is a proof how very much more I *think* about Magdalen!"

"And what am *I* to say to your talking so little about 'Matty?'—I *had* hoped that th prospect of brotherhood with your friend would have been more welcome!"

"If I could only look upon it as among the possibilities of things!—But were you to tell me that my father had asked to be

knighted, —or that Pillicock of Pillicock Hill, old Cromer, had subscribed to the Cobden testimonial,—I would believe it sooner than that, in this world of contradiction and contrariety, two people so perfectly assorted to each other as you and Glynne, were likely to come together in wedlock!"—

"How is such an infidel to be convinced! At least, promise me that, when I break the matter to my father, you will support our cause?"

"It will need no supporting, Matty!—What better could your family desire for you than to become the wife of a man possessing high principles, intelligence, character, competence of fortune, and distinction of birth?"—

"They may desire nothing *better*, perhaps; but something *different!*—Papa has set his heart on establishing me within reach of Deasmarsh."

"At Melfont Park, of course. But that question you long ago negatived. And though my father may still desire the renewal of

George's proposals, surely he has given abundant proof, within these last few days, that the strongest of his personal prejudices are secondary to the wishes of his children? After his consenting to *my* union with the daughter of the Squire, no fear of his opposing *yours* with my friend Glynne,—the only thing wanting to perfect my own happiness!—Think what pleasant times we shall have of it, Matty! When you are tired of visiting us at Deasmarsh, we shall go over and see you in Ireland. Glynne has a famous salmon-leap at his Castle Rackrent,—the very thing for the Easter holidays!"

Matilda could hardly refrain from a smile at the mercurial nature of his projects.

"And in time," continued he, setting her raillery at defiance, "poor old Burtsmill will come to be included in our round of visits. For Tom, be it known to you, lady fair! has done the duty of a younger brother, by taking the fair Claudia off my hands; and my father has such unlimited influence over her uncle,

that I have little fear of the old gentleman's consent to their marriage."

"And I promise you, dear Reresby, that, however unacceptable to you as a wife, you will like her of all things as a sister-in-law!—You never saw a more good-humoured, amiable, grateful little girl."

"And even if less than perfection, I am bound to approve of her as Mrs. Thomas Mordaunt, considering how unwilling she has shown herself to let her fair hand and her hundreds of thousand pounds go out of the family!—And I should have been loth to see the last of Burtsmill, Matty;—Burtsmill, where we were born and bred;—Burtsmill, which not only made us, but made us *happy!*—The old factory will always be as dear to *me* as the Castle of Hapsburg to the House of Austria!"—

Engaged in such pleasant reminiscences and glowing anticipations, no wonder that the minutes slipped by, till the small hours of the night almost grew again into the signal

for work-a-day duties.—On the whole, however, Mordaunt was not sorry to enjoy his breakfast *tête-à-tête* with his wife; — that wise and sober-minded partner of his useful existence, whose early frugality had done so much towards securing the prosperity they were now enabled to turn to such good account.—It was a consolation to talk with *her* over their children!—And to *her* he did not scruple to avow that the cup of sweets which Reresby found so palatable, had for *him* a grievous flavour of hyssop. As the time approached, indeed, for him to proceed to Cromer Hall, he extended his hand to her in silence, as though requiring the support of the being dearest to him on earth, at a moment so trying.

On rising from the breakfast-table, he was glad to find that obstacles still retarded his departure. — An absence of some days from home had caused a world of business to accrue upon his hands;—justice-business,—farming-business, — parish-business; — com-

plaints of the injured,—claims of the poor,—and appeals to the Briarean power of the Man of Capital.—For the wealth of Mordaunt ran like molten gold in the languid veins of the district.—Without *him*, the industrious could not work, the naked could not be clothed, nor the hungry fed.—His provident mind created fields for enterprise and occupation for idleness, as well as shelter for those invalidated by decay of nature for providing for themselves.

But, after an hour spent in his justice-room in conferring with the courtiers in smock-frocks, and cabinet ministers with accompt-books in their hands, who waited anxiously at his levee, his mind felt all the better prepared for his task. Business was to the active-minded Mordaunt like contact with his mother-earth to Antæus.—It was *there* he felt his value.—It was there he understood his own usefulness.—It was there he measured, by the level from which he had risen, the height to which he had raised him-

self!—If ever, for a moment, he felt proud, it was when surrounded by humble petitioners, who appealed to him with all the greater security of sympathy and aid, from knowing him to have been once as themselves.—

With a renovated mind, accordingly, he took staff in hand, to cut across the park by Deasmill towards Cromer Hall;—an inauspicious road,—but the shortest by a mile; and he had no mind to loiter by the way.

As long as his foot was on his own land, his thoughts remained absorbed by the complex interest of his errand.—But, no sooner than, after crossing the green lane, he entered the grounds of the Lord of the Manor,—his adversary,—his foe,—his antagonist in courts of law as in the decencies of private life,—the sensation so new to him of being a trespasser, took possession of him, body and soul.—

There was something so bewildering in suddenly traversing a path, within sight of Deas-

marsh, whereof all the country round was familiar to him as his glove, yet where all was nevertheless strange and new,—that for a moment he felt dizzied by the altered aspect of distant objects, viewed in a light in which he saw them for the first time.—The spire of Deaswold Church seemed to have changed its place; and when, from a higher level of the hill, he beheld the smoke and flame of a locomotive skimming like a flying dragon the valley below, he seemed to become suddenly aware of the proximity of the railroad, which to Deasmarsh was invisible; and of the change his intervention had wrought in the aspect of the country.—

While panting up that steep and naked hill, he could *almost* understand the envious grudge cherished by Cromer Hall against the pleasant shadiness of Deasmarsh.

The Squire was "at home."—Unprepared for such an astounding event as Mordaunt's visit, the bumpkin who answered the hall-bell ushered the stranger into the cheerless study

which afforded as curious a contrast to the Deasmarsh library as the arid hill-side to the green slopes of its park;—and having received his card, proceeded in search of "master."—

"No man having the least claim to the character of an English gentleman would insult another under his own roof," had been Mordaunt's reflection, as he crossed the enemy's threshold;—and he was justified in his belief that a visit so frankly proffered could not be absolutely refused, by the speedy appearance of Mr. Cromer.

Not, however, unaccompanied.—The Squire was followed by a duck-legged scrubby little man, who, though not formally introduced to the visitor, took a seat near him, with so much the air of one who came prepared to be a professional witness of whatever might occur in the interview, that Mordaunt had no hesitation in setting him down as the "pestilential attorney."—

The Squire, indeed, was still so com-

pletely under the influence of amazement at Mordaunt's arrival, that he had not collected the scattered forces of his mind to meet the enemy. — He was *almost* civil !— He almost forgot that the stranger within his gates was the detested Man of Capital, and *he* the shrunken, defeated, humiliated Lord of the Manor, — the crestfallen master of Cromer Hall !—

CHAPTER XXVI.

'Tis thus the spirit of a single mind
Makes that of multitudes take one direction;
As roll the waters to the breathing wind,
Or roams the herd beneath the bull's protection.
BYRON.

"I have the pleasure of acquainting you, Mr. Cromer, that the news from the Rectory this morning is highly satisfactory,"—said Mordaunt,—unwilling to break at once into the matter of his visit.—"The patient passed a good night. When I called there at nine o'clock, he was still asleep."—

Not an inch did the Squire relax from the rigid perpendicularity of his spare figure at this intimation;—nor did the puckers of his mean face, so different from the lines of thought ploughed by time and reflection in the brows of nobler-minded men, indicate

the slightest sympathy in the information afforded.—

"You must be aware, sir," said he,—reply of some sort being inevitable,—"that Mr. Jacob Cromer and myself are not on terms to make his health a matter of much interest in this house."—

A rejoinder concerning the indissoluble tie of fraternal relationship rose to the lips of Mordaunt.—But he forbore.—His errand was one of conciliation.—

"You are, I fear, surprised at my intrusion into a house where I have little reason to suppose myself a welcome guest," he resumed, after a moment's pause.—"But finding, sir, that in matters of some moment, in which your family and my own are equally concerned, you have been misled by false representations, and have acted under erroneous impressions—"

The little duck-legged attorney moved restlessly in his chair.—

"I have considered it my duty, both as a father and a magistrate,—I wish I could add as a neighbour,—to wait upon you; in order

to place the case fairly before you, and leave it to your own candour to make such admissions of misconception as you may think proper."—

"My opinions on the subject in question were grounded upon facts known to the whole county, sir; and, on all occasions, I express them unflinchingly, as it becomes an honest man to do," said the Squire, who was gradually overcoming his panic of surprise, and recollecting that he was face to face with Mordaunt of Deasmarsh.—"If any body, gentle or simple, be disposed to call me to account for them,—here I am!"—

"No one is accountable for having been led into error," replied Mordaunt, unresentingly. "It is only those who, after being enlightened, *persist* in asserting what they know to be untrue, who are bound to answer for their words!"—

"Later or sooner, I am quite ready to answer for mine!" persisted the Squire,—who seemed to court an affront, with the view of justifying retaliation.—

"The explanations I am desirous mean-

while of making to you, Mr. Cromer, and in the most friendly spirit, are of so confidential a nature," resumed Mordaunt, glancing towards the anonymous auditor,—" that—"

" *That* gentleman, sir," interrupted the Squire, " is not only my friend, but my man of business. Whatever you may have to say to me, would be so immediately communicated to him, that it is better he should hear it at once from yourself."—

" In that case," resumed Mordaunt,— " though for both our sakes I had rather our interview were private,—I must waive all further delicacy.—I understand, sir, you have been informed, and have publicly repeated, that, between your niece Emma and my son, there exists a connection unacknowledged to their parents and discreditable to both—"

" I have asserted—because I know it from eye-witnesses to be *true*,—that they were in the habit of meeting daily, last year, in the deserted millworks adjoining Clemson's cottage,"—rejoined the Squire, with an air of surly determination. — " And I say again, that if one of my labourers were found with a

parish girl under the same circumstances, I would not give much for her character!"—

It was so urgent to prevent the Squire from committing himself by further violence on the subject, that Mordaunt hastened to the point.

"I conceive that nothing in my conduct since I have been a resident in this neighbourhood entitles you, Mr. Cromer, to doubt my word," said he; "and I now give it to you, as a Christian and a gentleman, that your niece never, on any one single occasion, met my son at Deasmill.—They had, in fact, no temptation to such a rendezvous; being at ample liberty to meet wherever they thought proper, beginning with their own houses."—

A bitter and almost audible sneer (timidly emulated by the professional witness,) was all the reply vouchsafed.

"So much in vindication of one of the best and most modest girls in the kingdom!"—resumed Mordaunt with spirit.—"But, as regards my son, so far from attempting to defend *his* conduct, I freely admit that he *was* in the habit of frequenting Clemson's

premises, for the purpose of meeting one whom it was impossible for him to see elsewhere, and who was probably mistaken for the young lady so unjustly accused."—

"No doubt a substitute has by this time been provided!" retorted the Squire, with a scornful toss of the head. "Some wretched girl, willing to take upon herself, for certain considerations, the misdemeanours of Miss Emma Cromer!"—

"You would scarcely say so, sir, did you surmise the situation in life and irreproachable character of her to whom I allude," remonstrated Mordaunt; "a young lady belonging to one of the first families in the neighbourhood," added he,—trusting to let gradual light into the mind of the Squire, and prevent too sudden a shock.

"There is but one young lady, saving your own daughter and mine, living within ten miles of Deaswold," cried the Squire;—"and *that* is Miss Emma Cromer."—

"And if," persisted Mordaunt, "the alternative you have suggested,—if nearer to yourself than your niece,—my son had found

an object to whom his whole heart is devoted, and to whom he would fain devote every moment of his future life—"

The Squire sat as one paralyzed. He scarcely seemed to breathe.—He did not even attempt to speak.—

"Would he be altogether hopeless," continued his agitated visitor, "of obtaining your consent to his marriage with your daughter; to whom, with the full consent of his family, he is desirous to offer his hand?"—

Still, not a word escaped the firm-set lips of Cromer.

"Mr. Mordaunt, sir," interposed the attorney, obsequiously addressing his client, who appeared stupified, "purposes to you to terminate all further 'ostilities between the families in the 'andsomest manner, by a match betwixt Miss Magdalen and his son and *h*eir!"—

"Magdalen!—Magdalen Cromer, meet a man unknown to her family at Clemson's mill?—A daughter of mine go skulking to underhand appointments, with a young fellow not allowed to set foot across her father's

threshold?" — burst at length, as by the opening of a sluice-gate, from the long compressed lips of the panting Squire. — "I don't believe it,—I won't believe it!—'Tis an accursed and mischievous lie!—Women are bad enough,—I scarce know the one that's to be depended on.—But that girl, who has neither seen nor known the shadow of harm, —that girl who sits composedly from morning till night, looking her mother and me full in the face,—could never, *never* be guilty of conduct such as would shame even people I could name, every drop of blood in whose veins is puddle!"—

By a generous effort, Mordaunt subdued the impulses of irascibility to which this angry outburst gave rise; trusting that, after a first explosion, the father's wrath would subside.

"That I admit my son's full share of culpability in this untowardly affair, Mr. Cromer," said he, "is proved by my frank offer of all the reparation in my power. These young people have been imprudent.—Be it the better part of their parents to pardon them and make them happy!"—

"Your son—your son!"—cried Cromer, who had thrown aside all pretence at self-control, —"what is your son to *me*?—Who cares what becomes of a son of yours?—Do with him what you will—marry him to whom you please,—and let him and his wife go to the devil!—But, as regards my daughter, sir—my daughter Magdalen Cromer,—whose forefathers have been estated esquires bearing arms, in this county, for the last four hundred years, I would have you to know that, sooner than see her take up with a low-born manufacturer, —a man whose grandfather was a parish apprentice,—I'd see her lying in the grave!"—

A cold shiver thrilled through the frame of Mordaunt.—Still he forbore.—The happiness of Reresby was at stake!

"But if your daughter's peace of mind and fair fame be endangered by your opposition to her attachment,"—pleaded he—"if the attention you have yourself drawn upon the unfortunate Deasmill affair—"

A new light seemed suddenly to startle the mind of the Squire. Darting from his seat, and throwing open the study-door, he called

aloud for his daughter, in a voice that echoed shrilly up the old-fashioned square staircase opening from the hall to the roof.—

"Let Miss Cromer know I wish to speak to her—*immediately!*" cried he to the bumpkin who, his name being "Tummas," chose to answer to that of "Magdalen." During which short colloquy, the attorney found time to sidle up to Mordaunt, with a suggestion that, as "the Squire's blood was up, may be it might be better to adjourn the discussion till some more easy moment."

"Now or never, sir!" was the firm reply. For Mordaunt had by this time seen enough of the delicacy of Mr. Cromer's deportment, to feel that it would not do to abandon a timid and defenceless girl to the rough visitings of his rage.

A moment afterwards, Tummas put his head awkwardly into the room.—His young lady was with "Missus."—"Missus's compliments, and Miss Magdalen warn't well enough to come down."—

"We will see *that!*" cried her father,

stalking out of the room, ere Mordaunt had time to remonstrate with his intention of forcing his daughter to so painful an interview. And before he had half done expressing to the duck-legged little gentleman his trust that the proposal for her hand, which contemplated only her happiness, might not be made a pretext for mortifying and distressing her, the door was again violently thrown open, and Cromer reappeared, dragging in by the arm a beautiful, trembling, ashy-pale girl; who, but for the powerful grasp with which he upheld her, would have sunk at once to the ground.

"Sit there,—if you fancy yourself too weak to stand!"—cried he, in a hoarse voice, flinging rather than placing her in a chair.—"Nay, no whimpering!" he continued, forcing away the hands she had clasped over her face,—though her eyes remained as tearless as her lips speechless;—"but look me steadily in the face, Magdalen Cromer, while you answer, as you will at the day of judgment, whether, forgetting what is due to yourself

and your parents, you have ever given a meeting at Deasmill, or elsewhere, to young Mordaunt of Deasmarsh?"—

Poor Magdalen, who had sunk back in the high-backed chair into which she had been flung, sat with her eyes fixed despairingly upon her father, as if prepared for implicit obedience. But her powers of speech were palsied.

"Answer me, child!"—reiterated her father —again griping her arm, "answer me at once! Do not expose me to the shame of hearing you falsely accused by these Deasmarsh people, without affording me right and title to tell them that they lie in their throats!"—

"Mr. Cromer!" — shouted Mordaunt, — starting from his place. But in a moment, the attorney crept between his patron and the exasperated guest, as if to prevent a hostile collision.—

"Enable me," continued the unappeased Squire, "to tell the person before us that his son is as contemptible in *your* eyes as in mine; —that you neither know nor want to know

him;—and that, sooner than become his wife, you would marry Vickers there,—or—no matter whom,—the greatest scamp in the county!—Speak, Madge!—Have you suddenly become an idiot?—Are you or are you *not* acquainted with Mr. Mordaunt's son?"—

"I am, sir."

"And you have met him at Deasmill?"

Magdalen attempted to speak. But her lips quivered without articulating a syllable.

"You *have!*—I see it in your confounded face!"—cried Cromer, clenching his fist. But as he advanced menacingly towards her, Magdalen flung herself out of her chair at his feet,—embracing his knees,—perhaps, to excite his pity,—perhaps, to secure herself from his rage.—

"There must be an end of this, sir," said Mordaunt, firmly interposing.—"If you are capable of exercising unmanly violence against this feeble girl, *I* will not stand by to witness it."

And while he endeavoured to raise Miss Cromer from the ground and replace her on a seat, Vickers exerted himself to represent,

aside to his client, the danger of exposing to the enemy so much of his family history.

"And what part of my family history has he not contrived to make his own?"—cried the Squire aloud, disdaining all attempts at concealment.—"What part of my property has he not contrived to injure?—He came from his blackguard factory, a stranger into this parish, (where, for ages and ages, my family had been as kings in the land,) and trampled upon me with his upstart pretensions at consequence. My life has been made a burthen to me through his settlement in the parish; and, when my head is laid in the grave, the Deaswold I leave behind will be no more like the Deaswold in which I was born, than though it were foreign ground. —All this is his doing—all, his *accursed* doing! —Not content with which, he must needs plant his foot on my own hearthstone, and prove to me that my daughter is a wanton!"—

So far from listening to this outrageous apostrophe, Mordaunt was exerting himself to soothe with fatherly kindness the trembling young woman, whose distress of mind was

relieved by a burst of tears, on finding herself so tenderly entreated by the father of Reresby.

"But this I beg him to understand," continued the Squire, still talking of Mordaunt as though he were not present,—"that I would as soon have my blood mix with that of the hangman, as with that of a Manchester cotton-spinner; and that, if Magdalen Cromer do but exchange another word with his puppy of a son,—out of my doors she goes—at once, and for ever!"—

"And thank GOD she is no longer ignorant," added Mordaunt with spirit, folding her hand kindly within his own, "that, for the future, mine are open to receive her!—As the wife of my son, fondly will she be cherished at Deasmarsh!"—

"Then let her choose between us at once!" cried the Squire—suffocated with rage.—"If she *wants* to leave her father's house, let her go, and be damned!—Nobody wishes to detain her."—

While poor Magdalen was uplifting her clasped hands entreatingly towards her

father for pity and forbearance, her brother Stephen suddenly made his appearance. Having caught the sound of the Squire's voice at its highest pitch of frenzy, as he entered the hall-door and learned from Tummas that Mr. Mordaunt was the guest by whom it was provoked, he probably judged the occasion a good one to conciliate his father by playing the bully in his behalf.—

"What is all this row about, sir?" cried he, startled at finding his sister included in the group. "I trust, father, no one has been wanting in respect to you or Madge?"

"It is your sister herself who is wanting in respect to me!" said the Squire, quieted, as a wild beast is sometimes quieted, by contact with its cub.—"Will you believe it, Stephen? After all we have heard of that infamous affair at Deasmill, (for which, as Vickers was saying only last night, some one might yet swing,) the jade whom Ralph Drewe watched so often into hiding was no other than yonder sweet-spoken young lady;—before whom, forsooth, your mother has often

chidden me for alluding to so indelicate a subject!"—

"But you do not, I hope, sir, pretend to connect the interviews between Miss Cromer and my son with the dreadful crime accidentally associated with the scene of their meeting?"—cried Mordaunt, with just indignation.

"I *do* connect the poor urchin found in the Deas with the young libertine of whom you choose to talk as though he were Prince of Wales!" retorted the Squire;—"and for more reasons than one.—How came it, pray, (as I was saying t'other day at Basinghill to my friend Settringham,) how came it that the girl Hakewill, whom Hilshere the turnpikeman positively swore at the inquest he had seen skulking at nightfall towards the spot where the body was found, having in her hand a bundle tied in a handkerchief the colour and pattern of the piece found round the neck of the child,—how came she, I say, to disappear out of the village of Deaswold, with her mother and sister;—after repeated visits to Deasmarsh,—*after repeated visits, I say, Mr. Mor-*

daunt, to Deasmarsh;—where she boasted of having been closeted for hours with the father of Mr. Beresby Mordaunt!"

"Where's the good of dwelling on the subject, sir?" cried his son, sullenly, interrupting him.—"The thing is past and over. Let the hare sit!—At present, what we have to look to is, that there are two persons present here whose company is less welcome than their room."

"Before I relieve you, young sir, from that of *one* of those to whom you allude," said Mordaunt, assuming the stern severity of a judge, "let me request you to remove your sister from hence. What further must pass between us is unfitted for her gentle ear."

On which hint, Magdalen herself, without waiting for her brother's interference, rose feebly from her place, as if about to leave the room.

"Not a step, at your peril!"—cried her father, interposing betwixt her and the door. "Those who behave as you have done, Magdalen Cromer, can bear to hear what they do not scruple to act. People who are squeam-

ish only in their ears, deserve little consideration!—Sit down!"—

"As you please, sir!"—said Mordaunt, also, though unbidden, resuming his seat; his tranquil nature almost overpowered by these unseemly discords.—"My scruples were for *your* sake rather than *mine*. But I must request of you to issue orders to your *son* as well as your daughter not to quit the room!" —continued he, on discerning by a glance that the heir apparent of Cromer Hall was preparing to make off.—"I should be sorry to attack a man, however guilty, behind his back."

On which apostrophe, the Squire motioned his son peremptorily back to his place, with the gesture of one accustomed to find his authority absolute.

"You have charged me, Mr. Cromer," continued Mordaunt, in a firmer voice, "with having held secret communication, at my own house, with a family of the name of Hakewill; whose sudden and mysterious disappearance from Deaswold, during your brother's absence in London, has been the origin of the more curiosity and comment, that in the various

examinations and inquiries arising out of the finding of a dead infant in the Deas, within the bounds of my estate, these people were pointed out as objects of suspicion."

"Ay!"—interrupted the Squire—finding no better words at command than to reiterate verbatim his charge. "You won't deny, I suppose, though you took care not to send the case to the Quarter Sessions, that Hilshere the turnpikeman saw the girl Alice skulking at nightfall towards the spot where the dead boy was picked out of the mud; bearing a bundle wrapped in a handkerchief of the colour of the rag found round the neck of the strangled child!"—

"Exactly.—Such, and even stronger, was the presumptive evidence of her guilt.—Your accusation against me consequently includes no less a charge than having wilfully defeated the ends of justice, by compounding for the worst of felonies, — for manslaughter, — for *murder!*"—

"I am glad to find, sir, you understand the full drift of my meaning," said the Squire, with an insulting nod.—

"And you naturally inquire," said Mordaunt, resuming the thread of his argument, —"what, having my eyes open, has induced me to do this?—I will tell you, sir,—tell you, at the risk of transferring to your own heart the heavy burthen you would fain fix upon mine. Because, Mr. Cromer, having visited, as an act of humanity, the cottage of these wretched Hakewills, I obtained from them, not as a magistrate but a benefactor, a full confession of the circumstances connecting them with that fatal discovery—"

Again, Stephen Cromer attempted to sneak from the room.—But it was now Mordaunt's turn to bid him remain.

"If you wish to entitle yourself to mercy, young man," said he, "bear your part in an explanation which may save you from more fatal exposure!"

"By what right, sir, do you pretend to give orders to my son?" cried the Squire, involuntarily resuming his bullying tone on perceiving the cowed air of Stephen.

"By the right of an upright man over a guilty one!" was the stern rejoinder. "The

handkerchief to which you have so often referred, Mr. Cromer, as attaching suspicion to the sister of poor Mary Hakewill, and which others in the parish depose to having seen in the laundry at Cromer Hall, was in truth the property of your son."—

"*Yours?*"—cried the Squire, turning towards the young man, from whose face every particle of colour had now disappeared.—

"Nay! The child itself, Mr. Cromer, was his offspring; and if *his* were not also the crime of infanticide, it was by his advice,—by his *orders*,—that the body of the infant (which I verily believe to have died from natural causes,—the convulsions of infancy aggravated by ignorance and neglect) was deposited in the river with a stone round its neck; in order to evade the inquiries and suspicions likely to arise from its being presented for burial in consecrated ground."

"Is this *true*, sir?"—demanded Cromer, turning to his son.—And the dead silence that pervaded the room conveyed only too full an affirmation.

"There was no help for it!" muttered Ste-

phen, raising his arm as though to ward off his father, who rushed upon him,—evidently with the intention of felling him to the earth. "What was I to do with the child?—What was I to do with the girl?—I had not a shilling of money!—I asked you for some, father, the very day the child died,—and you thrust me out of the room with a curse!—"

"But you can swear to me, before God," exclaimed the Squire—(to do justice to whom be it said that the exposure of his own brutality weighed nothing against his present uncertainty whether the hands of his son were stained with blood-guiltiness,) "you can swear to me, Stephen, that the brat was *not* put out of the way,—that it died naturally and fairly?"—

"May I drop dead this moment before you, father, if its mother and I didn't fret over its death as though born in honest wedlock!" cried he. "You were right, sir,"—continued he, turning, in the excitement of the moment, to Mordaunt for support. "It died of convulsions the day after its birth."

"Then, no matter what was done to the

corpse!" exclaimed Cromer—breathing more freely.

"Such was so far my own impression, sir," resumed Mordaunt, "that, on finding the mere concealment of the birth, if proved, would condemn the unfortunate young mother to long imprisonment and hard labour, I took occasion, before it transpired that, suspicion had fallen on the wrong sister, and before the real delinquent became exposed to examination, to facilitate the departure from the country of a most unfortunate family."

A few muttered imprecations addressed by the Squire to his hopeful son, alone broke the painful silence that ensued.—Miss Cromer, with her hands crossed over her bosom, seemed endeavouring to overcome her emotions; while the attorney was probably cogitating how this alarming complication of incidents could be converted into a job.

"You will now perhaps further inquire, sir," resumed Mordaunt, gravely addressing the master of the house, "what interest induced me to interfere in behalf of strangers, at a considerable cost, and with grievous

risk to myself were my interposition only slightly misrepresented, as it was when you yourself saw fit to attribute my conduct to motives the most nefarious."—

"Any one would have done the same, to whom such strong evidence had been afforded."

"By one of the day-labourers on your estate! — It is not on such a source *I* should be tempted to rely, in matters involving the credit of one of my country neighbours and the honour of my niece!" rejoined Mordaunt.—"Nay, even when the guilt of your son was clearly demonstrated to me by the sight of his own letters and the confession of his accomplice, my desire that so foul a blot might not rest upon a gentleman of honourable station belonging to this parish,— above all, to the brother of one in whom, for some months past, I have trusted I beheld my future daughter-in-law,—that, consulting no one, and little suspecting how cruelly the infamy might be made to recoil upon my own family, I took such measures as effectually stifled further inquiry."

Under an impression that the absence of

any accusing party secured him from legal prosecution, Stephen Cromer now began to exhibibit symptoms of returning audacity.—"He should be glad to know," he said, "by what right Mr. Mordaunt pretended to meddle with his concerns?—He should be glad to know what authority he had for all he had been advancing?"—

"Do not suppose that I have acted without retaining in my hands the documents necessary to my justification!" said Mordaunt.—"When necessary, I will exhibit them to your father and his man of business.—And now, sir," continued he, turning towards the elder Cromer, "I again reiterate my request that the remainder of our interview may be confidential."—

"No, by God!" exclaimed the Squire, the turmoil of whose mind seemed only to exacerbate his enmity.—"Say on, and say out!—Enjoy to the utmost your triumph.—Set your foot upon my neck, and grin for joy while I grovel in the dust. But *these* shall share my mortification. *These* shall hear me tell you to your face, again and again, and till the

last moment, that whatever may have been the boyish follies of my son, never will I consent to see a child of mine engrafted on your miserable stock!"—

"Then let me beg you to peruse *this*,"—said Mordaunt, taking from a pocket-book he had previously drawn from his inner pocket, a letter, over which the Squire hastily cast his eyes, as not at first comprehending his drift.—

"Robert Cromer?"—said he, as if reciting aloud the signature,—"and dated 'Peter Hall, Cambridge?' This is the writing of my son Bob—who has not set foot in Northamptonshire these five months!—Are you going to implicate *him* in the confounded business at Deasmill?"—

"Not in the *Deasmill* business. By taking the trouble of reading your son's letter, Mr. Cromer, you will find it contain acknowledgments addressed to a stranger, for assistance—*pecuniary* assistance,—rendered him at a time when, having been refused it by his father, he was in distress that must have ended with expulsion from the University.—

Having been tempted, inadvertently let us *hope*, — rashly, *certainly*, — to use without sanction the name of a young friend in a money transaction, he was on the point of being taken up for embezzlement,—or (why not use the right name) for *forgery*,—when, by the timely intervention of a young man who, knowing the respectability of his connections and the grief such an event would cause to the worthy Rector of this parish, enabled him by restitution of the money to hush up the affair."—

"I had heard some slight hint of the business, sir," said Stephen, in reply to the haggard looks of inquiry fixed upon him by his father.—"I know that Bob had taken some imprudent step, last March; when distressed for eight hundred pounds to pay a billiard marker, from whom he had borrowed the money on a promissory note. But I did not know that Tom Mordaunt was the person who got him out of the scrape."—

"Yes,—Mr. Cromer—my youngest son!" added Mordaunt,—firmly;—"by whom so large a sum could not have been commanded

without my seconding. The letter in your hand is one of acknowledgment for the advance."—

"You shall be paid the amount before I am four and twenty hours older!" gasped the Squire.—"Had I known a child of mine was your debtor in so much as the value of a farthing, I would sooner have gone without food and clothing!"—

"It was not with a view to payment, sir, I placed that letter in your hand," said Mordaunt:—even Vickers,—even the little duck-legged attorney feeling ashamed of the ungraciousness which prompted the Squire to regard only in a pecuniary light, an obligation which had probably preserved his son from transportation. "What I wish is to prove to you that, while you have been heaping injuries on my head, I and mine have, from first to last, desired to live on friendly terms with so near a neighbour,—the lord of a manor wherein is embarked so large a portion of my property and personal comfort. I came into this county, Mr. Cromer, eager to lay aside the labours of life and their

prodigious profit, for the sake of leading a quiet life in the bosom of my family, and witnessing the fructification of my toils in the happiness of those around me and the benefit of the community.—But from the very day of my arrival, sir, you strewed flints in my way, and encompassed my dwelling with a hedge of thorns!—*Why*, I know not, except from envy of the superior riches obtained by means to which a man born with *your* independence would not have deigned to stoop. Every past injury, however, I am willing to overlook and efface from my memory, as though it never had been, provided you give me in return what will be prized in my family as the greatest of treasures,—the daughter who looks as though she longed to throw herself at your feet, and ask your forgiveness and blessing."—

"Keep off!—No *cant*,—no *hypocrisy!*"—cried the Squire, in a hoarse voice, motioning away the poor girl who, bathed in tears, was preparing to make the supplication suggested. "If she choose to marry your son," continued he, turning towards Mordaunt, "*let*

her!—Take her, sir,—take her at once.—I am fallen too low to feel much pain from a humiliation the more.—As to her fortune—"

"I want no fortune," cried Mordaunt, snatching into his arms the lovely and inoffensive being who, spurned by her unnatural family, seemed scarcely able to support herself.—"Whatever portion you intended for her can be given to the young man at Cambridge; whose imprudence has involved him, I fear, in a complication of misfortunes."—

"If my uncle should drop, however," observed Stephen, as if anticipating the death of the Rector as a piece of good fortune, "Bob will come into a living of a good fourteen hundred a year!"—

"Heaven preserve this parish from so great a calamity as the loss of my friend Jacob!" fervently exclaimed Mr. Mordaunt, who did not appear to reckon a tendency to forgery high among canonical virtues.—"May he live to witness a general peace-making among us!—May he live to see this neighbourhood established on a footing of friendliness and peace!"—

"If you allude to this house, sir, and those whom it contains," growled the Squire, "in *my* opinion, it matters little what becomes of us all!—My sons are disgraced for ever!—"

"Pardon me! Nothing has transpired, or need transpire, of the circumstances which have come to our knowledge, beyond the bounds of this chamber."

"If not disgraced in the eyes of the world, at least in their own eyes and mine!—My daughter will soon belong to those whom I thank for what they have done for my family, but whom the command of the Queen herself should never make me take by the hand. My brother and his daughter have enlisted with the enemy,—my own flesh and blood have revolted;—and had I my wish and will, I would see Cromer Hall burned to the ground, and never set foot in Northamptonshire again!"

"At present, you are under the influence, Mr. Cromer, of strong and painful impressions. Time will soften them!" said Mordaunt, rising to take leave. "That you have granted, however reluctantly, your consent to your daughter's union with my son Reresby,

will thoroughly obliterate all those I have received during this trying interview. Should you wish to see me again, I am at your service; or Mr. Vickers can wait upon me as your representative. But that I fear you would very speedily repent having sanctioned such a measure, and that it might give rise to injurious comments," added he, again affectionately taking into his own the hands of the drooping Magdalen, "I would profit by your permission, and carry away this young lady with me at once, to those who are labouring under the utmost impatience to welcome her to their heart. But I have an intermediary measure to propose; to which no one, I should imagine, would object. Her poor little cousin is sadly in want of aid and comfort. A visit to Deaswold Rectory till you are more disposed to view her conduct with indulgence, would afford a satisfactory alternative for all parties."

"Where she pleases, and as soon as she pleases!—I care not if I never see her face again!"—said the angry man. And when Mr. Mordaunt, after a salutation that included all

present in its courtesy, hastened out of the room, poor Magdalen followed him, unnoticed by those who instantly gathered into a group to discuss the astounding revelations of the last hour, to falter out a few words of grateful acknowledgment.

"The devotion of my whole life will be insufficient to repay such generous kindness!" was her murmured farewell.

"In an hour, my dear child, my carriage shall be here to convey you to the Rectory"—were the parting words of her new father.

CHAPTER XXVII.

> The multitude of angels with a shout
> (Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
> As from blest voices) uttering joy, Heaven rung
> With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
> The eternal regions.
>
> MILTON.

The unexpected arrival of Magdalen at the Rectory,—an explanation of the origin of which was not immediately necessary,—was naturally ascribed by her uncle and cousin to her desire of affording comfort in the house of sickness.

"This is *your* doing, dear, good Mr. Mordaunt!" cried Emma, on seeing her step out of the Deasmarsh carriage; while the invalid, discerning in her presence by his bedside proofs of relenting on the part of the Squire, trusted that, since his brother's interdiction of all communication between the girls was taken off, the rest would soon follow. At no

great distance of time, the Squire would doubtless make his appearance at the Rectory, to attest the complete vindication of his innocent niece.

. The moment this notion took possession of his mind, his convalescence outstripped even the sanguine prognostications of his doctor. A less warm-hearted man than Jacob might, in fact, have been gratified by the interest his illness had excited among his neighbours; and when he saw the whole Mordaunt family collected round him, and his own little smiling girl was the first to point out to him that her cousin was hanging upon Reresby's arm, and to ask whether he would not contrive to get well very soon, that *he* might perform the marriage ceremony for them instead of Mr. Milnward, he felt satisfied, from the light in her laughing eyes, that he had completely misconceived her sentiments, and that his uneasiness on her account had been gratuitous.

It was something, to be sure, to have had his error shared by a woman so skilled in the tactics of her sex, as the widow of the late

celebrated Sir Nicholas Barton! But when his daughter proceeded to assure him that in London she had been Reresby's confidant, admitted into the secret of his love for Magdalen when even his own sister was untrusted, he could not help wondering how he had ever fancied anything so preposterous as that Emma — his own Emma — could have given away her heart without *his* previous sanction of her choice!—

On recovering sufficiently to find his way down stairs again, and feast his eyes once, through the lattice of jessamines and musk-roses, upon his fragrant lawn, where he found the Deasmarsh party increased by the arrival of Sir Herbert Glynne, and noticed that, whenever family matters were discussed among the elders of the party, the young baronet and Matilda found it pleasanter to instal themselves out of doors, in the rustic seat under his favourite plane-tree, where they were only slightly discernible from the house, he *did* perhaps think it a little strange that his own little linnet should remain the only mateless bird!—But how fortunate for *him!*—Had

Emma taken to flight among the other couples, what would have become of his deserted nest!—

After the lapse of a few days, indeed, it became necessary for Reresby to return to town for the discharge of his parliamentary duties; the struggle of parties being just then of so much too vigorous a nature to admit of the good cause being fought by proxy, that, both in town and country, the honourable member for Castle Dangan was forced to submit to be *un*paired.

No time was lost in the interval of his absence, however, in forwarding his marriage. And when Ghrimes, of Northampton, waited upon Mr. Cromer with a sketch of the marriage settlements which were to assign to his portionless daughter a jointure of four thousand a-year, the sharp-eared solicitor managed to extract from the ejaculations of the irritable man intelligence promising to his employers all that was wanting to complete their satisfaction.

The vexation of mind arising from the repeal of the Corn Laws, aggravated by the annoyance of seeing Mordecai the Jew not

only sitting in the king's gate, but sitting there after having nobly redeemed his own two worthless sons from the utmost rigour of the law, had determined the surly owner of Cromer Hall to quit the country!—

"Between ourselves, Mr. Ghrimes," said the duck-legged attorney, sidling in a conciliatory manner up to his grander *confrère*, on finding that it was become a more lucrative line of policy to promote peace than foment discord between the parties—"Deasmill 'as become a sad eyesore to the Cromers!—The young Squire, as you probably know, 'as compromised with his father for a 'andsome allowance, and is off to America after the 'akewills;—fearing, I suspect, that, in spite of your employer's noble exertions, the child-murder business might again be brought for-'ard at some future time, by persons 'ostilely disposed."—

"He is right.—As long as any of those implicated remain on the spot, they must always be in jeopardy," replied Ghrimes.

"And as regards the Squire," added Vickers, depressing the corners of his mouth,

" 'is 'ealth and 'appiness being completely broke up, he 'as taken a sort of 'atred to the neighb'r'ood."—

" And no wonder!" — rejoined the Northampton solicitor — aware that he could not better serve his patron than by encouraging the distaste. " To such an extent, that he was saying to me yesterday," added Vickers, " that if he could only get a satisfactory tenant for the 'all, he'd let the place at once, —and go and settle at Bath; a place to which he took a great fancy when the young ladies was dying at Clifton!"—

A satisfactory tenant was not long in finding; nay, was already found. The only objection raised by Mordaunt to his daughter's marriage with Sir Herbert Glynne, was the dread of her settling in one of the most disturbed districts of Ireland; and the occasion that now presented itself for the Man of Capital to establish her within reach of her family, was too tempting not to be instantly closed with.

Before Stephen Cromer quitted the country, he joined with his father in signing a lease

for twenty-one years, of the staring old mansion and a hundred and fifty acres adjoining; —which accommodated the Squire and his lady with the power of removing their spider-legged old chairs and tables, as well as their frightful old family pictures, and a van-load of pickles and preserves, to the house in Marlborough Buildings, where they were to wrangle with each other over their weekly bills and the misconduct of their family, for the peevish remnant of their days.—

One of the most gratifying moments of Mordaunt's life was that when, on taking possession of the premises, he gave *carte-blanche* to his daughter for the complete refurnishing of the house.—

"I need not tell you, Matty," said he, "to make the Hall as little like as may be to what it was in other times. — Your own good taste would have suggested *that*, even if I had not been anxious that Magdalen should forget she had ever any home in these parts but Deasmarsh. But let nothing remind either ourselves or any one else, of the Cromers. God knows I left nothing undone to pro-

pitiate the unfortunate family we seem to have driven from their own hearthstone! — I submitted to things from *them*, and would have submitted further, such as I would have borne from no other living soul; and all, from the desire of peace and quietness! But the good neighbourship becoming to Christians, had no charm for them.—They were incapable of feeling that all men are brethren. They would not yield to the progress of the times, or enter into the equalizing spirit of modern enlightenment. — And they have consequently done wisely to hide themselves in a crowd; where people may cherish their weaknesses and enjoy their egotism, with less molestation. Henceforward, may this parish become as one family — one happy social knot!—We shall be able to effect twice as much for the good of our poorer neighbours, by acting in concert;—whereas, so long as John Cromer was on the spot, expend what sums of money I might for the benefit of the population, I was sure to find tares springing up among the wheat I was sowing."

If Matilda replied to this address as though

she had not been listening *very* attentively, there was some excuse for her. She was planning in her own mind how the "parlour" they were standing in could be converted into a dining-room; so as to admit of her morning room being made to open into the study about to be converted into the library of Sir Herbert Glynne!—

The only member of the happy circle on whose brow a tinge of sadness still lingered, was Magdalen;—Magdalen who, with every desire to preserve a dutiful reverence towards her parents, could not but perceive that they were quitting the country in which they had so long abided, without leaving a regret behind!—

But in the eyes of her new kindred, the pensive gravity of her countenance served only to enhance its charm. Till now, they had only seen her at church, or in the fields, muffled in her bonnet and cloak; — and the distinguished grace of her finely-turned head and beautiful form so completely surprised them, that even the sober-minded cotton-spinner was soon heard echoing the declara-

tion of his son that she was the loveliest creature upon earth! — Under any circumstances, the Mordaunts must have found her pretty and pleasing. But the forlorn helplessness of her situation, and the melancholy which their utmost endeavours failed to disperse, rendered her so interesting a hostage in their hands, that they scarcely knew how to make enough of her. —The father, mother, and sister of Reresby, vied with each other in exertions to make her forget that for his sake she had become an orphan.

She, who had lived as a paria in the home of her childhood, suddenly found herself an object of worship. From the heads of the family down to Don and Donna, every living thing at Deasmarsh was at her feet!—

"You will bear in mind, my dear, that I have *two* daughters going to be married!"— was Mordaunt's generous instruction to his wife, when the wedding clothes were to be ordered;—"whatever may be wanted for Matty, is wanted for Madge."—

"It is lucky for *me*, perhaps," said the gentle girl to her cousin, one evening when a

dinner engagement of the Deasmarsh family at Settringham Abbey left them alone at the Rectory, — "lucky for *me*, perhaps, dear Emma, that I have the drawback of Reresby's absence and my father and mother's cruel estrangement, to prevent my poor head being completely turned!— Such kindness, — such consideration,—nay, such real affection!—How am I ever to repay these dear friends the indulgence they have shown?"—

Emma, indeed, thought they must be *almost* repaid by the delight taken by the grateful Magdalen in all and every thing at Deasmarsh: a spot which, to her cramped experience of the pleasures of modern luxury, was fairy land.—Such multitudes of new books to read, — of new flowers to wonder at, — of new comforts to enjoy, — seemed to her humble heart an almost too lavish adornment of a world of probation.—

The good Rector, meanwhile, was nearly as much pleased at witnessing the generous joy with which Emma entered into the brilliant prospects of her cousin, as though they awaited herself.—He was doing his best to

get well, that he might officiate in the double solemnization which, immediately on the close of the session, was to drive the parish of Deaswold out of its senses.—For Mordaunt was to bestow marriage portions and new-built cottages on six young girls to be united with six of the most deserving labourers on his estate;—and the festivities about to celebrate the wedding of his heir, — the heir of his well-earned fortune, — were planned upon a scale likely to make the good old county shake its sides for glee.

The party assembled for the celebration was not to be a brilliant one;—lest the absence of Magdalen's parents should provoke painful observations.—But it was to be a *merry* one.—The tenants were to be feasted. The poor were to be fed. It was to be an event on which the parish of Deaswold was likely to dwell with gratitude for years and years to come.—

Considering the frightful oath by which Squire Cromer had bound himself never again to cross the threshold of the Rectory, poor Jacob could not much regret his self-banish-

ment from a spot where, as brothers, their unchristian alienation afforded so pernicious an example; more especially, after learning in sad confidence from Mordaunt what it was necessary should be explained to him,—the criminality of the future representatives of the family. But he heard the mortifying tale, and beheld the departure of the Squire and his wife, with a spirit humbled to the dust. In the opinion of Dr. Palliser, the emotions excited by these family events afforded the only obstacle to his immediate recovery.

Emma, however, with her loving eyes and consolatory spirit, was always at hand, to place before her father (as *he* had placed before herself in former moments of despondency) the blessings which so far exceeded the troubles of his lot,—the affection and respect that waited upon him,—and the means of usefulness placed in his hands.

As she sat beside his easy chair, reading or talking to him, or making his tea, while the sweetness of the summer evening breathed pleasantly from his garden into the cozy room, it was impossible indeed not to agree

with her that he had much to be thankful for. At least so thought young Milnward, who was established at the Rectory, fulfilling the duties of an active curate; his gentlemanly manners and active zeal having already so recommended him to the Deasmarsh circle, that Mordaunt, the fountain-head of good suggestions, could not forbear inquiring through Ghrimes of the duck-legged attorney, whether the Squire was to be tempted (the conduct at college of his son Robert having disqualified him for taking orders) to dispose of the next presentation of the family living.

It would not be *quite* impossible, he thought, to perfect the happiness of the Rectory, by permanently attaching to its fireside the good spirit of the house; in the first instance, as the happy bride of her father's curate, and eventually, as the wife of his successor.

"The sole obstacle I perceive to the match, my dear little coz," whispered Reresby, who already assumed a kinsman's privilege with his kind friend and flame of former days,—"(for I will not think so ill of you as to fancy

you can long persist in indifference towards a good-looking, good-hearted, right-minded young fellow like Milnward, who loves you like the light of his eyes)—the sole obstacle I perceive is, that you would never prevail upon the widow of the 'late celebrated' to honour the ceremony with her presence!—Her little ladyship made so many apologies to me for being sister-in-law to a rectory, that she would die outright on finding herself aunt to a curacy; and one cannot afford to part with so rich a treat!"—

At this suggestion, Emma primmed up her pretty mouth; but whether resenting the attack on Lady Barton, or the hint that Edward Milnward might become in time as acceptable to the daughter as the father, remains to be proved.—

"Let them alone, my dear fellow, let the loving couple alone!" cried Sir Herbert to his brother-in-law. "Canaries never finish their nests, if people watch them while building! You a terrible mar-match, Reresby! If you had not made poor Lady Bel. and Dick Lovell the talk of the town, by pointing

out their courtship to Cad Rowlandson, who had nothing better to do than carry the report in the course of the morning to seven clubs and nine morning visits, besides entertaining a dinner-party at Lady Madrepore's curiosity shop,—it might have come to a marriage at last; when we might have enjoyed the fun of seeing Mark Trevor amplify himself into a double-bodied shadow, like the frog in the fable."

"Or like a two-volumed back-gammon-board in one piece!"—

"Whereas, having been congratulated into breaking off the flirtation, the fair countess is talking of wintering in Athens; the only capital in Europe where she has not yet made herself talked of, and *très bien porté* just now, for ladies addicted to Aspasia-ism."—

"Don't attribute her Philhellenies to *me!*" cried Reresby. "The *real* motive of her dismissing Lord Richard was her disgust at finding what *very* domestic life was the fashion of the day!—Somebody assured Lady Bel. that the Fauconbergs had been seen in the Isle of Wight, honeymooning in a fly and

pair; and she refused Lovell, before the day was over!"—

"No matter!—Practise on her fanciful ladyship whatever hoaxes you think proper; but Emma is too good a creature to be trifled with!"—

In spite, however, of this prohibition, no sooner had the solemnization of the sacred rite, to which all parties had been looking forward with such interest, produced a Mrs. Mordaunt the more in the world, in place of the Miss Mordaunt who ceased to exist, than Reresby contrived to whisper to his father that, during the bridal tour of his children, he must do his utmost to forward the wooing at the Rectory.—

"Our friend Jacob is quite well now, my dear father," said he; "(you heard how finely he read the service this morning?) so that he can afford to part with Milnward for a time; and I have set my heart on another couple following us to the Lakes, before the leaves are off the trees. This commission of mine will give you an excuse for frequent visits to the Rectory, where you are always

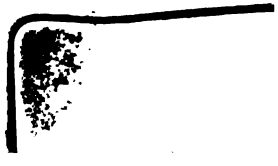
so welcome: and serve to keep your hand in for Tom, whose wedding, I suspect, will take place before the year is over."—

But Mordaunt's heart was too full to answer. Two carriages and four, adorned with favours, were waiting to convey the two happy couples to the railroad; and besides the emotion arising from bestowing his parting benediction on Matilda and Magdalen, he had just returned arm in arm with his excellent wife from the monster-tent erected on his lawn, where the toast of "Long life and prosperity to the worthy family of Mordaunt!" was being echoed by shouts of applause, such as had never before rent the air in the parish of Deaswold.

The bells rung, — the bonfires blazed, — the cottages were adorned with garlands of flowers, and the village was planted on either side the way with rows of young fir-trees from the plantations. From the Darley Station, where the flag was flying as for a royal birthday, pealed a battery erected by the zeal of those connected with the railway; while Clemson and his wife stood bowing and bob-

bing in wedding garments provided by the generosity of the heir of Deaswold; whose happy marriage they evidently regarded as, in a great measure, their handiwork.—

When, in process of time, the formal account of the solemnity of the day, contained in the "Northampton Independent," was confirmed at Basinghill by the testimony of Farmer Richards and half a dozen other worthies, who had witnessed the roasting of the oxen and distribution of the strong beer, the Miss Moulseys and his Excellency Aristobulus were forced to admit that, if neither lords nor ladies graced the ceremony, neither the lord lieutenant nor the county members, nor their neighbours from Settringham Abbey, nor even Sir John and Lady Mary double G., the poor had ample cause to remember the day; and bless the enlightened mind and beneficent spirit of the second providence of Deaswold,—the self-created gentleman and MAN OF CAPITAL.—

THE END.

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